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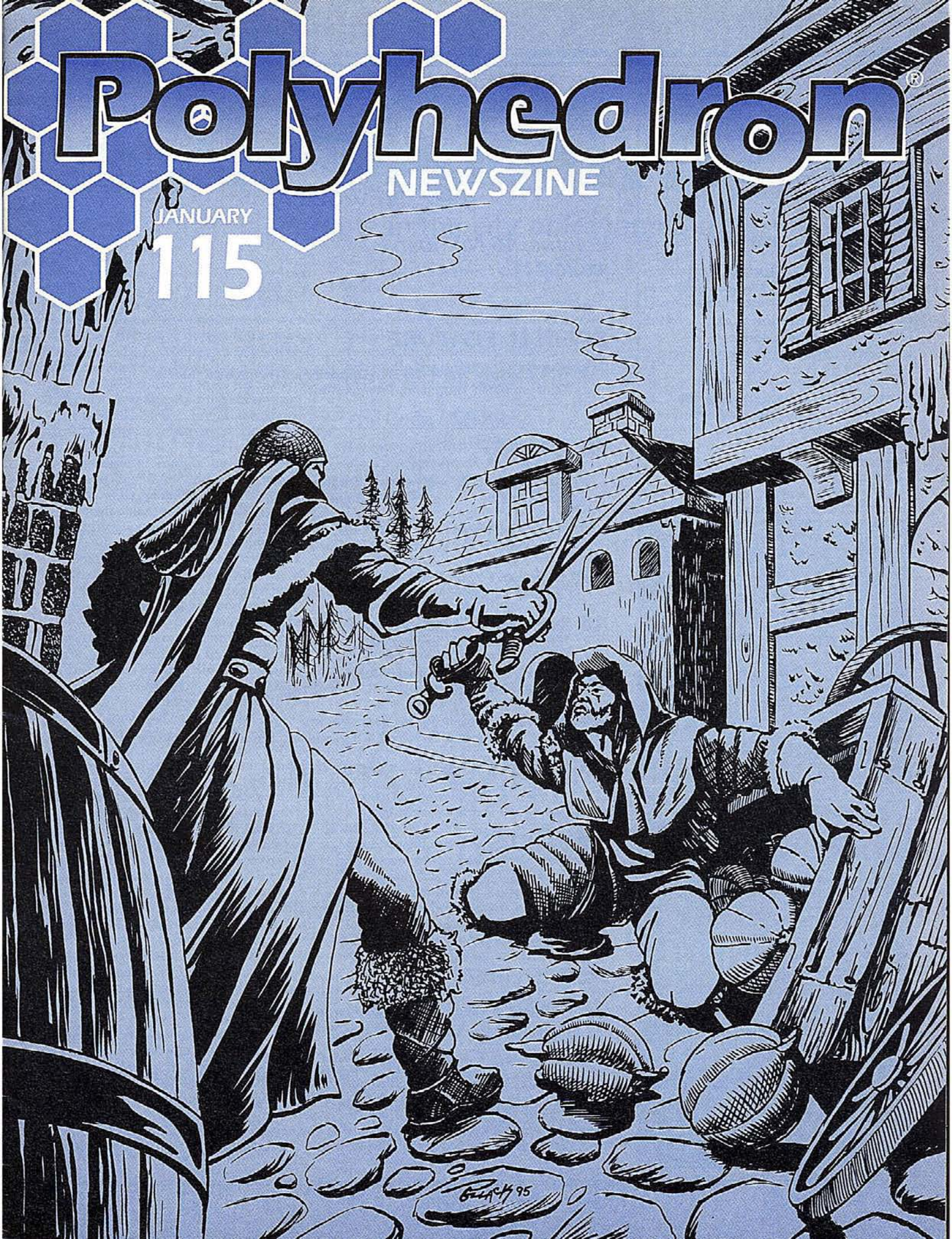

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The House of War

Tempus' fortress temple in the city of Ravens Bluff

Many of the original warriors who traveled with Charles O'Kane belonged to a mercenary group called the Blood Swords. Most of the Blood Swords were dedicated to the god of battle, Tempus. O'Kane continued to pay the Swords a retainer once he became Lord Mayor, a retainer still rumored to be paid to the temple of Tempus. As the years went by, the Blood Swords organization drifted apart as members settled in the city of Ravens Bluff. Years later, a wandering priest of Tempus named "Spinebender" found himself traveling through the region. Spinebender was very disappointed in the lack of organized Tempus worship in the city and set about correcting the oversight.

Spinebender was the offspring of a northern barbarian warrior and one of the giantkin for which the region is famous. He was well known for his tremendous strength, strength he often used to break an opponent in his grasp. He organized and built the first temple of Tempus in Ravens Bluff, becoming War Master during the opening. He died many years later at the age of 72. It is recorded that Spinebender personally led the forces of Tempus to victory in over 19 battles. He was also credited with victory in over 140 personal challenges either among those in the temple organization or upon the battlefield. After his death, there was a struggle for dominance among the higher ranking priests, which left the temple vulnerable, and it was during this time that the temple was robbed by a daring band of thieves.

The stories are vague at this point, but most of the bards agree that on each of the next eight mornings the broken body of one of the thieves was found upon the temple ruins. Four thieves also turned themselves in, admitting to their parts in the temple's destruction. Many believed that Spinebender had returned to exact vengeance in the name of Tempus, and the remaining temple leaders quickly put aside their differences to rebuild the temple and construct a holy shrine to the spirit of Spinebender.

On the night they were to consecrate the shrine, the spirit of Spinebender appeared. He instructed the four most senior priests to lay a blade on his shrine. Then the shrine began to bleed. "May he whose blade is first covered in the blood of Tempus' enemies become the new high priest of Tempus! This will settle the question of advancement to the high mantle of Tempus."

The Code of Tempus

Tempus, while lord of all battles, is most concerned with battles where great fighting skill is displayed. This focus on skill has created a code of behavior within the temple: all battles should challenge the skill of the follower. This is not to say that followers will pass up a fight which seems to offer little challenge, but those battles will be concluded as quickly as possible. The code prohibits cowardly acts such as poisoning, back stabbing, fighting restrained individuals, and under most circumstances, missile weapons. Although the need for ranged weapons is sometimes obvious, higher level followers of Tempus will not use them. The code prohibits followers from causing random violence, always a relief to the community around the temple.

A second consequence of this outlook is the ritual challenge, a way that followers of Tempus seek redress for wrongs. A follower can challenge anyone who he believes has slighted him to ritual combat in order to seek redress. These are tests of arms and are not usually fatal. The challenge can be declined, but the person who declines is held to have been wrong, at least among followers of Tempus, and is considered a coward. Followers of Tempus never decline such a challenge. When a follower challenges a non-believer, the temple is responsible for insuring that local laws are adhered to throughout the challenge. Within the temple hierarchy, followers can only challenge those directly above or below them, though if necessary a superior will challenge someone on behalf of the slighted follower. The battle is fought in a place chosen by the combatants and acceptable to any local officials, and no magical items may be used by the two combatants. Once a matter of challenge is decided, the participants cannot challenge each other over the same matter again.

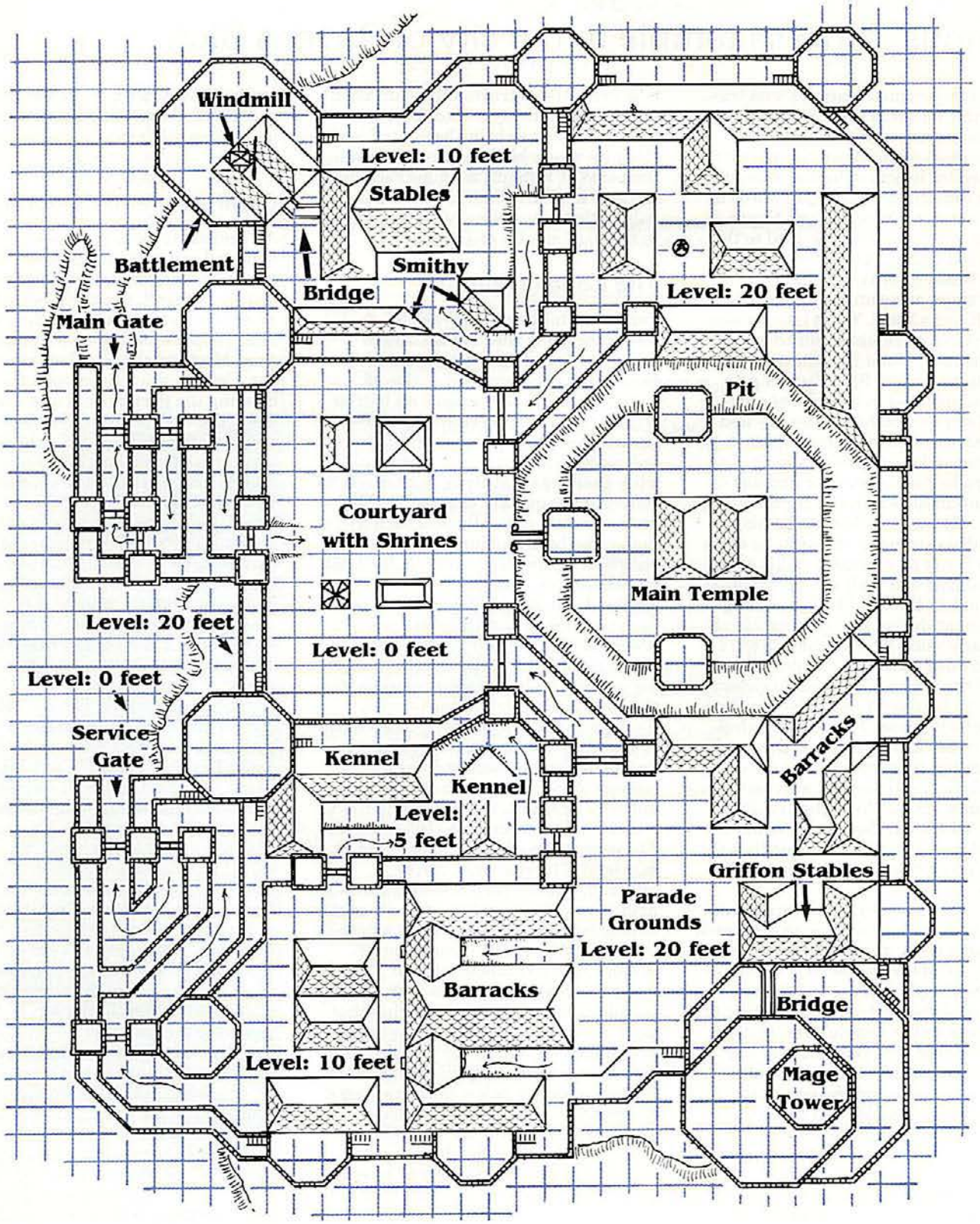
Ceremony and Celebration

As Tempus is more interested in the skill and prowess his followers show in battle, the worship ceremonies reflect this. As a result, the ceremonies take on more of an aura of a battle than what most people would consider proper worship. Most worship involves ritual combat. Certain prayers are said for blessing the participants and dedicating the actions of the faithful to Tempus, and the combatants pray silently over their chosen weapons. Morning prayers take the form of weapons practice, and for those of higher rank the study of tactics and strategy. The nature of the devotions being what they are, any battle that tests the skill of the follower can be considered a proper religious ceremony to Tempus, wherever it takes place. Preaching is usually not a part of temple life; it is normally reserved for converting non–believers outside temple walls.

The day on which Tempus fought the god Garagos and defeated him in battle is considered a holy time, as is the time when Tempus "visited" Toril. High ceremonies are held on the day of Garagos's defeat and the first and last days of his "visit." In high ceremonies battles of skill are fought between followers. The elevation of priests and other followers to higher positions are announced. These people show their right to the new positions by ritual combat. Lists of important deeds that have been done in the name of Tempus since the last high ceremony are read. The names of followers that have died in the service of Tempus since the last high ceremony are listed, along with those that died in the past committing extraordinary acts.

One other special ceremony is the commemoration of a significant battle. Followers of Tempus journey to a battlefield and either raise a monument or gather at one already there. This monument contains the names of those fallen, with special attention given to the

The Temple of Tempus



names of followers of the war god. It also lists special acts of skill and bravery by specific people. Followers of Tempus often spend more time raising monuments than erecting temples.

The Red Knight Cult

This sub-cult of the church focuses on strategy and tactics, and considers issues such as supplies, transportation, and money. It is made up of members of the church and those who believe but follow other trades, such as merchants. Generally, the members are higher ranking members of the church, who have learned that there is more to battle than mere fighting. Red Knights dress the same as normal followers of Tempus.

The Temple and Ravens Bluff

As one of the temples of the Civic Religion, the church of Tempus has a place on the Clerical Circle, and the priests who represent Tempus are vocal inmilitary matters, where they believe that they have expertise. Should war come to Ravens Bluff, the priests of Tempus would expect to be placed in charge of the Clerical Circle and possibly the army as well. The Tempurian priests are not interested in many of the other topics that the Circle discusses, and frequently trade their vote in exchange for later support.

As of now, the priests of Tempus do not have an official place in the military structure of Ravens Bluff, but many of them are soldiers or train with the soldiers on a regular basis. Higher level priests often serve as advisors to the officers who follow Tempus. The church has long demanded an official place in the military structure, preferably at the top. The Council of Lords has resisted these demands because the hot-headed battle priests are not the best leaders during war-time, although they are some of the best fighters.

Dissatisfied with their place in military affairs, the temple has decided to maintain a large ready force of its own, far larger than other temples of Ravens Bluff. The army of Tempus is almost 200 strong, almost a fifth as large as the city's army. Should war come, the priests plan to use their army to show why they should be in charge of all military operations. This is not to say that they will enter a battle only when they will can clearly turn the tide, making themselves look all the better in the eyes of the citizens of Ravens Bluff. Rather, they believe their battle prowess and tactical skills are being overlooked by the government of the city, and in the event of a war, they feel that they will correct that oversight.

The Hierarchy

Priests of Tempus either choose to remain unsworn, usually joining the ranks of adventurers, or they swear themselves to a higher ranked priest whom they wish to follow. In this way, the ranking priests gather followers, which serve as personal retainers and as divisions within the Army of Tempus (the whole of the fellowship). Priests with more than 50 followers earn the rank of Battle Leader, and these individuals must swear themselves and their followers to a senior priest at a temple. Sworn priests must obtain permission from his superior to travel on a quest or adventure away from the immediate area.

Priests who become dissatisfied with their superiors may not sever their allegiance, but may challenge the superior to ritual combat. Should the challenger win, he would supplant his former superior. All other priests sworn to the old superior may either swear allegiance to the new ranking priest or stay with the old. If a superior wishes to remove one of his followers from his army, he must defeat that follower in challenge combat.

War Master Carlos "Bloodstrike" deVentura
Human Male Dual–class 9th level Fighter/11th level Priest of Tempus

Age: 29
Height: 6' 5"
Weight: 265 lbs.
Hair: None
Eyes: Gray

The high priest of the temple of Tempus is called the War Master, and Bloodstrike was chosen as high priest very recently. Avengina Morte, the previous War Master, fell in battle against Horde riders, and Bloodstrike slew over 20 enemy troops a dramatic but failed rescue attempt. His quick rise is seen as a mark of Tempus's favor.

Bloodstrike is a very cunning and brutal warrior. He has on occasion sacrificed his own warriors and priests to overcome an enemy. His battle ideal is "victory at any cost." Once, during a truce, he led a sneak attack against an enemy post, annihilating his enemy's leadership and blocking their retreat.

He rules the temple with an iron fist, going so far as demanding the return of spiked gauntlets of authority from those out of favor. However, he does see the political value of showing a gentle side, and to this end he has begun a support program within the temple for the city's orphanages. In a public statement on this issue, he said, "One of the unfortunate costs of war is the many orphans and widows left behind. We believe that we who wage war should do something to lessen the suffering of these victims."

Battle Master Lyalen Toforman
Half Elf Male 8th level Fighter/ 9th level Mage

Age: 155
Height: 5'9"
Weight: 151 lb.
Hair: White
Eyes: Blue

The Battle Master is in command of all the temple's military forces and is responsible for enforcement of the temple rules. All wizards also report to the Battle Master through an internal society called the Mystic War Order.

The current Battle Master is Lyalen Toforman, a bold, charismatic half elf who is currently in the favor of the high priest. Bloodstrike admires Lyalen's independent spirit, and, in fact, even encourages that spirit. (Who says that Bloodstrike isn't a wily politician? Lyalen's independent nature at least keeps him from directly supporting Bloodstrike's principal rival, Surgeon General Brotalbet.) On the battlefield, Lyalen is a dynamic, brave commander, and a dauntless, disciplined soldier. During times of peace, he is a damaging bar brawl waiting to begin.

Lyalen personifies the Tempurian edict, "Taste life today, for you taste death tomorrow." He believes that anything worth doing should be done to the extreme. The knowledge that he will likely die violently makes him totally fearless in all circumstances. He has been in so many "friendly" tavern brawls that the City Watch has restricted him to leather armor and no weapons when outside the temple. This has had no effect on his aggressiveness, a fact he is more than willing to demonstrate on the heads of unfortunate braggarts in various of the city's taverns.

Weapon Master DaeMonde Vochette
Human MaleDual–class 2nd level Cleric/13th level Fighter

Age: 38
Height: 5' 11"
Weight: 218 lbs.
Hair: Black
Eyes: Black

The weapon master is in command of all the temple training, directing and training all of the weapon instructors that teach at the temple. The position reports directly to the War Master, who may appoint a new Weapon Master at any time.

The current Weapon Master, DaeMonde Vochette, is a quiet man, believing that devotion to Tempus is better illustrated by the spilling of an enemy's blood than by the preaching of words. While not a physically imposing man, those who have seen him in battle generally give him a wide berth on those rare occasions when he has business outside the temple.

DaeMonde is a devout follower of Tempus, bordering on fanatical. He never misses a sermon, always sitting quietly in the front row, showing reverence to Tempus and deference to even the lowest of his priests. When the training gong sounds however, DaeMonde becomes a powerful, commanding presence, whose only goal is to forge men into fearless weapons. He tolerates no insolence from his pupils, regardless of their rank. Given the proud, violent nature of those who answer Tempus' call, DaeMonde often finds himself the target of an embarrassed student's fury.

Many within the church insist that DaeMonde should have become a cleric of Tempus. Only a few, Bloodstrike among them, know that DaeMonde was indeed once a specialty priest of Tempus. It is DaeMonde's most painful secret; he failed his god by committing the most unpardonable of sins: cowardice in battle. At the age of 16, DaeMonde rode into his very first battle, the banner of Tempus flying from his lance, and froze with fear. Men were being butchered all around him, and he was too scared to carry forth the banner of Tempus. Finally, as the enemy began to overwhelm his position, the young field surgeon entered a battle frenzy that lasted for nearly half an hour and changed the tide of the battle. In Tempus' eyes, however, it was too late. DaeMonde awoke cut off from his god. It was 20 years before he returned to the temple, hoping that by training other priests to be unflinching in the face of the enemy, he may be granted absolution. So far, none of his old powers have returned.

When he is not training the clerics, DaeMonde can be found either at his forge making weapons and armor, or training a new litter of war dogs. He sleeps only four hours a night, so it is not unusual to hear faint echoes of a hammer ringing off an anvil at all hours of the night. Although he is not a recognized priest of Tempus, no cleric within the walls of the temple has the authority to skip DaeMonde's training regime, not even the War Master. While this may be in part a humble concession to DaeMonde's skill, it is also a means of further undermining the Surgeon General's authority. Left to her own devices, Surgeon General Brotalbet would lift a sword no more than once a week. With the zealous DaeMonde in charge, the Surgeon General and her healers find themselves at the Weapon Master's mercy for at least one hour each day. Those healers unable to meet the daily demands quietly move on to other temples, keeping Brotalbet's influence from growing.

Surgeon General Catherine Brotalbet
Human Female 9th Level Cleric of Tempus

Age: 36
Height: 5' 4"
Weight: 145 lbs.
Hair: Black with grey streaks
Eyes: Green

The Surgeon General is in charge of the healers and field surgeons (specialty priest healers). In addition, the Surgeon General oversees all internal workings of the temple except training and enforcement. This includes ceremonies, internal inspections, and the internal promotion system. Healers use the titles of priest or priestess, while all field surgeons are addressed with the masculine title of priest or sir.

The current Surgeon General of Ravens Bluff is General Catherine Brotalbet, a priestess who ascended through the ranks of the healers organization. As she prefers to avoid combat, she is looked upon with great disdain by the majority of the order. General Brotalbet is trying to arrange many changes to the temple disciplines, including more influence in the hierarchy for the healers organization. She is also secretly attempting to create a group of specialized diplomats whose peaceful methods of resolving disputes could threaten the might of Tempus. This concept is not supported by any of the other temple hierarchy and is very anti-Tempurian, and she could fall under great disfavor if it is discovered that she is attempting to create this group without Bloodstrike's permission. She sees Bloodstrike as one who only revels in shedding blood. As such, she feels that he is unfit to rule the temple, since winning a war requires skills other than just those used to kill. She has a respectful relationship with the Order of the Red Knight, since their means of defeating an enemy do not always require his destruction. She would also like to win the Battle Master over to her side, but so far Lyalen has remained aloof from the internal politics of the temple.

Troy, War Orphan
Human Male, 0 level
Age: 9
Height: 4' 10"
Weight: 125 lbs.
Hair: Brown
Eyes: Brown

Troy was orphaned as a result of the Horde incursions that lead to the Battle of Dragon Falls. He was found by General Brotalbet in a small village's stable. Troy, although terrified at first, has adjusted reasonably well to life at the temple. He is now a quiet, haunted specter of a child, scarred by war and the slaughter of his parents. Visitors to the temple are often uncomfortable around Troy because of his distant, piercing stare. Brotalbet and her healers have all attempted to aid Troy in his recovery but without success. Unknown to most, Troy has begun to rise early every morning to learn basic swordplay and animal training from DaeMonde. Troy has responded well to the dogs and has progressed frightfully well with the sword. If Brotalbet knew of Troy's early morning activities she might intervene, but Bloodstrike would be very pleased and would demand Troy's budding interest in war be encouraged. ❑

Bantam Knights

Ravens Bluff's Knights of the Golden Rooster

by Wayne Straiton

As with most knightly orders, the Golden Roosters were formed to bolster the city's military in time of war. While other orders are more specifically tied to particular talents, the Golden Roosters apply a diversity of skills to military activities. Golden Roosters can be found throughout the city's forces, leading and inspiring soldiers and sailors on all fronts. A Golden Rooster holds at least the rank of Lieutenant.

Because the knightly orders help bolster morale and pride among the citizens, the Rooster knights were encouraged to make themselves noticed around town and to spread the word that the city is well defended, especially during peacetime. This plan met with limited success, chiefly because of the the means by which the Roosters carried out their public relations campaign; their aggressiveness (courage!) and arrogance (confidence!)made them an annoyance more than a help. Many people still consider them to be all pomp and circumstance. This image is not helped by the original Roosters' easy admission standards.

Recently, however, the Golden Roosters have made efforts to improve their image in the community. Tougher admission standards were enacted to ensure that applicants are more worthy of knighthood. They have also opted for quiet elegance as opposed to the more ostentatious way they called attention to themselves in the past. While the leaders often seem overly concerned about status and personal appearance, most Roosters prefer the relaxed attitude this order offers its members compared to some of the more structured knighthoods. Many join as a stepping stone to another order, but there is a movement among the ranking Roosters to make this order as prestigious as the others.

Since the order imposes few rules on its members, a Rooster's reputation is based largely on his own accomplishments. Conversely, the order's reputation depends to a great degree on the reputations of its knights. If a knight always acts bravely and generously, his actions will increase the prestige of the Roosters. This is both a benefit and a hindrance, as often an excellent Rooster knight is invited to join another order.

Roosters take their oath very seriously; they are vigorous in their adherence to the tenets of their order. Principal among these tenets is their oath to defend Ravens Bluff from all enemies. Their honor and the honor of other knights is also very important to them. They must swear to refrain from lying and cheating, defend the honor of a brother or sister knight, and deal fairly with all persons they encounter, be they knight or knave. More and more squires are being attracted by these ideals.

One of the tests of a prospective knight's commitment to Ravens Bluff is the grant to the city of 1,000 gold pieces to be used to improve her defenses. The order accepts only those who have proven themselves in the face of adversity. *The character must be at least 4th level, and the player must donate two dollars, one of which goes to the charity of the host convention, and the other of which is used to assist the newly formed Knights' Council. This dollar is used primarily for paper printing and postage costs.*

Responsibilities

- A Golden Rooster must pay 10 gold pieces per tournament to support the Rooster Fitness & Training Center and the Rooster Roost.
- In time of war the members of this order are called on to fill the battle ranks of the other knightly orders and the regular army.
- A Golder Rooster must uphold the vows of the order at all times.

Benefits

- A secure room with a bed at the Roost.
- A storage chest at the Training Center for the knight's personal use. The Rooster Fitness & Training Center is known as the finest facility of its kind in the city. The Roosters are gracious enough to extend use of this facility to all former Roosters who have joined other orders.
- For 10 gold pieces per social event, proper escorts will be supplied for important parties and city functions. Many of the city's most available and attractive persons enjoy attending social gatherings on the arm of a Golden Rooster.
- The knight may write recommendations for a squire's admission into a knightly order.
- The knight qualifies for a another knighthood with three fewer chivalry points than those who squire directly to the other order.
- The knight receives three Fame points upon being accepted into the order. A Rooster receives one Fame point for every knightly honor awarded that is available to all knights, and two for every honor specific to the order. These may be divided among any category.
- Golden Roosters may serve with the City Watch.

Special Honors

Knights may receive each honor once. Honors may not be claimed. They are awarded by judges for specific actions written into a particular scenario.

The Golden Cane — This rooster-headed gold cane is given to knights who refuse to let danger intrude on traditions. This cane is a symbol of courage, bestowed on knights who commit an act of bravado, like having tea at the usual time even if the goblins are about to attack. The knight should symbolize a spirit of civilized behavior that refuses to bow before uncouth beasts and low born louts.

The Golden Cloak — This is given to a Rooster who keeps his cool in dangerous situations. It must be earned while completing a dangerous mission where there was a significant threat to the knight's companions.

The Golden Clasp — In the form of a rooster, this cloak clasp is awarded to any knight who stops an evil plot to bring the order's reputation into disrepute.

❑

Mercury Limited

The finest personal transportation service in Ravens Bluff

by Paul Pederson

Mercury Limited is a newcomer to Ravens Bluff. Catering to the elite of the city, it offers first class transportation via luxury coach. It is located on a large plot of rented land near the perimeter of the uptown district, not far from the arena. The grounds contain a brightly-painted barn behind a well-maintained, stone cottage. Above the cottage door is mounted a large, distinctive sign bearing the Mercury logo. It depicts a gold-bordered shield of deep blue, with a white diagonal lightning bolt dividing it evenly.

Proprietors Crystal Newtree (a mage) and Percy Lifeson (a paladin of Tyr) serve as host and coach driver, respectively. They are both active adventurers who lead busy lives. Joining them in the operation of their business are Polly and "Red", twin teenagers who serve as cook/clerk and stable boy. Their remaining colleague is an illusionist from Calimshan named Conde, who works as an office manager.

Mercury Limited's charter is simple. In the words of Crystal Newtree, "We provide premium quality personal transportation to any destination within or near Ravens Bluff. We offer a variety of services to accomodate the needs of our discriminating clientele." The sidebar entitled "Attention, Lords and Ladies!" contains a list of standard services. Special requests are negotiable.

Although Mercury maintains strict confidentiality regarding the travels of its customers, it is common knowledge that former speaker Lord Blacktree is a frequent customer.

Operations

Normal business hours are from mid-morning until a couple of hours after sundown, depending upon season. Ideally, business is scheduled in advance when a page or other messenger arrives to make an appointment. However, spontaneous requests are accomodated whenever possible. Payment is due upon trip completion, or in advance if desired by the customer.

Mercury's philosophy is that appearance is a critical factor in achieving success. A dress code of sorts exists, in that all staff must dress in clean and tasteful attire suitable for servicing the cultured citizens of Ravens Bluff. Property, especially the carriage, is kept clean and well-maintained.

To drum up business, Mercury has posted numerous notices around Ravens Bluff announcing their grand opening. Percy also makes a point of driving the carriage past auspicious events and near the homes of the wealthy whenever possible. He has been known to make these excursions regularly with or without customers.

Given the value of the coach itself, security is a major concern. To project a secure image, Percy often makes very visible rounds inspecting the premises and chatting with passersby. Crystal and Conde have made liberal use of *continual light* spells to keep the premises well-lit at night. In addition, they have been known to "trap" the grounds with numerous invisible objects every now and then.

The Carriage

This is the grand vehicle around which the business is centered. Not only is it elegantly beautiful, it is cleverly designed for maximum comfort and utility. The following description of this ornamented carriage is included in the owners' "Certificate of Authenticity":

"The carriage seats six comfortably inside, has room for a driver and passenger on top, and has plenty of storage space below and above for all manner of belongings.

"The carriage is fashioned of the finest oak treated to be water resistant. The oak is stained a deep burgundy from dyes imported from Kara Tur. Further, the finest gold- and silver-colored paints have been used on the raised leaf trim, and bits of ebonwood highlight the trim about the carriage doors. The carriage fittings, including wheel posts, carriage door handles, and upper railing, are made of fine hammered and polished brass imported from the Sword Coast. The filigree work on the door and the back of the carriage was expertly rendered by Silyagee Drygressel, famed Tantras painter. The interior seats are padded burgundy–dyed leather, and the floor of the carriage is polished walnut treated to be water– and scuff–resistant. The double driver's seat is jet–dyed leather treated to be water resistant, and in a compartment beneath the seat is a heavy canvas fitted to cover the seat and top of the carriage. The wheels are made of fire-darkened hardwood from the forests north of Daggerdale. The spokes are rolled in shaggybark branches heavily lacquered and trimmed in burgundy. The reins are the finest Waterdehavian black leather."

The inherent sturdiness of this ornamented carriage has been augmented by several applications of *oil of timelessness*, and can withstand up to 28 points of fire damage. The familiar symbol of a dark blue shield with gold border and diagonal white lightning bolt has been recently and painstakingly emblazoned onto the door by several local craftsmen. The overall effect is truly impressive.

The Grounds

Mercury Limited operates on a large plot of rented land on the outskirts of the uptown section of town, just a few blocks from the coliseum. A brightly painted wooden barn stands behind a single-story stone cottage with a thatched roof which serves as Mercury's headquarters. The grounds are bordered by a 6' tall fence of wooden planks on three sides, with the side facing the street being open. To the west and north of the buildings a wide lawn runs the length of the property, providing ample room to maneuver the horses and coach.

A large stone well of common construction stands between the two buildings. A wooden bucket attached to a rope hangs from a beam, some 40 feet above the water below. A winch mechanism attached to the sturdy frame is used to lower and raise the bucket.

The barn, which is conspicuously painted bright red with white trim, is intended to be very noticeable to passersby. Large double doors embla-

ATTENTION, LORDS AND LADIES!

MERCURY LIMITED IS PROUD TO ANNOUNCE THE GRAND OPENING OF A LUXURY CARRIAGE SERVICE. YOU WILL NOW BE ABLE TO TRAVEL IN A STYLE BEFITTING YOUR STATION. OUR SERVICES AND AMENITIES INCLUDE:

BASIC ONE HOUR SERVICE (3 GOLD PIECES)
BOTTLE OF FINE WINE
FRESHLY BAKED BREAD
ASSORTED CHEESES

ENHANCED THREE HOUR SERVICE (10 GOLD PIECES)
FINE WINE (UP TO THREE BOTTLES)
FRESHLY BAKED BREAD
ASSORTED CHEESES AND MEATS

DELUXE FULL DAY SERVICE (100 GOLD PIECES)
LARGE SELECTION OF FINE WINES
FRESHLY BAKED BREADS
ASSORTED CHEESES AND MEATS
SMOKED FISH OR ROASTED CHICKEN
BASKET OF ASSORTED FRUITS

TO SCHEDULE AN APPOINTMENT, SIMPLY DISPATCH A PAGE OR MESSENGER TO MERCURY COURT 222.

zoned with the Mercury logo are located at either end, and a wide passage runs through the center of the structure betwen them. The remaining area within this spacious, single-story structure is evenly divided between twelve sturdy stalls. These are used to house horses, feed, and equipment. Above the central passage, the vaulted ceiling rises to a height greater than twenty feet. Each night the coach is brought into the central passageway and parked toward the back of the barn.

The cottage is a single-story building with small but comfortably furnished rooms. Set about ten feet back from the street, its exterior of grey and white stone is topped by a darkly thatched roof. A small plume of smoke may often be seen trailing from its single grey chimney. A single door beckons to be opened. Although rather plain in appearance, it is kept very clean. Its rooms are detailed below:

A. Parlor: This is the only spacious room within the cottage. A small bell above entry door announces guests with a friendly ring. Visitors are greeted by the aroma of cooking (smoked fish and roasted chicken are common), and freshly-baked pastries are made freely available. Within are several chairs and side tables, as well as a large cherry-wood table ringed by six chairs. Against the back wall of the room is a large oaken counter next to the entrance to a hallway. This room serves as a dining area, as well as a lobby for those waiting for an appointment or simply visiting.

B. Pantry: This room adjoins the kitchen, and is essentially a large closet with floor-to-ceiling shelf space. It is amply filled with miscellaneous foodstuffs from Mercury's service menu, scores of bottles of wine, cooking supplies, a large iron kettle, and several large baskets.

C. Kitchen: This magically-illuminated room is ringed with counter space, but it still appears cluttered with pots and pans. A central hearth is the source of many pleasant smells, as Polly is a very proficient cook. The hearth is large enough to hold a large kettle atop its grill, and tapers as it rises upward into the ceiling. Although warm to the touch, it is well-insulated and its exterior cannot become hot enough to cause a burn.

D. Back Office: Located just around the corner from the parlor, this cramped room contains a single sturdy desk and large hide-covered chair. Against the back wall is a very heavy safe which contains various client records, deeds of ownership for the coach and other property, but surprisingly little currency. An especially valuable bottle of wine from a vintner in Waterdeep is stored here for a special occasion. Only Crystal and Percy have keys to the safe.

E. Polly's Bedroom: This room contains a large wardrobe, along with a single bed, end table, and lamp. The wardrobe contains a fairly complete collection of casual and business attire. A colorful tapestry on the wall depicts a forest scene with a unicorn and pixies.

F. Red's Bedroom: Red has a smaller wardrobe than his sister, but his room seems just as crowded due to a larger bed. Here too are an end table and lamp. His wardrobe holds several changes of clothes, mostly of the work variety. On the end table is a small cage containing a brightly-colored finch with a crippled wing. Red has cared for the bird since he found it two years ago.

G. Spare Bedrooms: There are three of these spartan rooms inhabited by Crystal, Percy, or Conde when visiting. Each is furnished with a smallish bed along with an end table and lamp.

H. Water Closet : This small and spotless room contains a wash basin, several jugs, washcloths and towels.

I. Cellar: This cramped 15' x 20' room has a seven-foot high ceiling. It serves as an auxiliary pantry as well as a storage area for currently-unused or valuable possessions. Among the stored items are three large wooden washtubs, a bathing tub, various and sundry tools, replacement parts for the coach, and spare firewood. Stacked in the southeast corner are several invisible boards.

Crystal Newtree
7th level female elven mage

Str	8
Int	18
Wis	8
Dex	18
Con	16
Cha	9
Com	16

AC: 6
Hit Points: 32
Alignment: Neutral Good
Hair/Eyes: Brown/Blue
Height: 5'8"
Weight: 110
Languages: Elvish, Common
THAC0: 18
Dmg: 1d6 staff

Weapon Proficiencies: Staff, dagger
Non-Weapon Proficiencies: Ancient History - Local (17), Read/Write Modern Common (19), Spellcraft (16), Ancient Languages - Dwarven, Written (17), Etiquette (9), Tumbling (18), Appraising (18), Gemcutting (16), Artistic Ability (8)
Magic Items: *Vest of Holding* (60 lbs)
Ring of Protection +1
Ring of Water Walking
Scarab of Protection (11 charges)

Spell Book
Level One: *Magic Missile, Jump, Detect Magic, Mending, Read Magic, Sleep, Hold Portal, Feather Fall, Unseen Servant, Mount, Shield, Spider Climb, Wall of Fog, Metamorphose Liquids, Comprehend Languages*
Level Two: *Knock, Invisibility, Darkness 15' Radius, Improved Phantasmal Force, Levitate, Strength, Mirror Image, Hypnotic Pattern, Forget, Rope Trick, Web, Flaming Sphere, Continual Light, Pyrotechnics, Stinking Cloud*
Level Three: *Spirit Armor, Item, Dispel Magic, Protection From Normal Missiles, Hold Person, Slow, Fireball, Haste, Melf's Minute Meteors, Suggestion, Fly, Lightning Bolt, Protection from Evil, 10' Radius, Infravision*
Level Four: *Dimension Door, Turn Pebble to Stone, Charm Monster, Stoneskin*

The Staff

Crystal is a very attractive elven woman with a piercingly inquisitive mind. She is slender and tall for an elf, with bushy light brown hair. She has high hopes that her two main passions, adventuring and this business, will provide the means for attaining fame and fortune. Although not accustomed to high society herself, Crystal isn't concerned about being labeled pretentious. She hopes to learn a lot about the lifestyles of the privileged, perhaps enough to join them.

Crystal is still miffed over the difficulties she and Percy encountered in starting their business. Finding and purchasing the carriage was only the first hurdle. It had to be modified and re-painted to exacting standards. Finding a suitable location was a further difficulty. Then there was the matter of obtaining a half-dozen trained horses. Furthermore, the entire setup process was plagued with guild hassles. For some inexplicable reason she had trouble dealing with Arvin Kothonos, master of the merchants guild. Although Arvin seemed to be something of a slovenly old man, Crystal never said anything to offend him, but for some reason, he worked to block the success of the project from the beginning. Despite these difficulties, she has retained her entrepreneurial spirit and enthusiasm.

Crystal was actually born "Visalis" Newtree, and until recently was a human male with a very peculiar personality disorder. Despite often placing himself in harm's way, he bordered on being necrophobic. That is, he was afraid of dying. However, it was not the act of dying which terrified him so; rather, it was the idea of dying before his time. As a precaution, he arranged to have Rhodan at the now-defunct Chemcheux Magic Shoppe pre-cast a special reincarnation spell for him. When Visalis was killed by a pack of slavering ghouls several months ago, the dweomer took effect and he received his present female elven form. Visalis/Crystal seems to have adapted to this change more readily than his/her somewhat flabbergasted comrades.

As the owner of a small riverfront acreage east of town, Crystal cannot spend all of her time at Mercury Limited. During business hours, however, she is usually working at Mercury. When not transporting a client, she may be found busying herself somewhere on the premises, most often helping Polly "mind the store".

Percy Lifeson
7th level male human paladin of Tyr

Str	18
Int	9
Wis	14
Dex	10
Con	13
Cha	18
Com	16

AC: 1 (Field plate, shield)
Hit Points: 45
Alignment: Lawful Good
Hair/Eyes: Black/Blue
Height: 6'2"
Weight: 194
Languages: Common
THAC0: 14
Dmg: 1d8+3 bastard sword +1

Weapon Proficiencies: Lance, Long Sword, Short Sword, Dagger, Footman's Mace, Horseman's Mace
Non-Weapon Proficiencies: Etiquette (18), Heraldry (9), Horse Riding (17), Singing (18), Animal Training - Horse (14), Read/Write Common(10), Alertness (15)
Magic Items: *Bastard Sword +1, Scarab of Protection*

Percy is a man of striking appearance. "Sir Percy of Arabel", as he calls himself, has steely-blue eyes and thick shocks of ink-black hair. He almost always wears his immaculate plate armor during business hours. Polite and honorable to a fault, he is also arrogant and can be condescending at times. Percy tends to speak to customers and most others in short statements which inevitably end a respectful "m'lord" or "m'lady."

A devout follower of Tyr, his primary purpose is to seek greater glory for Tyr (and to a lesser extent, for himself). He is uniquely qualified for this business because although he is not interested in material riches, he is very courteous and refined.

In combat Percy employs only the most direct of tactics, relishing a good fight to such an extent that he seems to welcome additional opponents. This odd cheerfulness is well-known to his associates, who generally do not share his optimism.

Percy maintains a small acreage east of town, situated directly across the Fire river from Crystal's home. He plans to build a fortress there someday, but currently spends very little time there.

Conde of Calimshan
8th level male human illusionist

Str	10
Int	18
Wis	10
Dex	18
Con	17
Cha	13
Com	9

AC: 0
Hit Points: 33
Alignment: Neutral Good
Hair/Eyes: Brown/Green
Height: 6'1"
Weight: 170
Languages: Common, Gnomish
THAC0: 18
Dmg: 1d4+1 dagger +1

Weapon Proficiencies: Dagger, Darts
Non-Weapon Proficiencies: Observation (18), Read Lips (16), Spellcraft (16), Engineering (15), Read & Writing - Common, Ruathek (19), Ancient History - Local (17)
Magic Items: *Ring of Protection +2, Ring of Spell Storing (hidden on person), Bracers of Defense AC 6*

Spell Book
Level One: *Phantasmal Force, Audible Glamer, Ventriloquism, Detect Magic, Identify, Sleep, Burning Hands, Read Magic, Copy, Unseen Servant*
Level Two: *Hypnotic Pattern, Invisibility, Mirror Image, Blur, Magic Mouth, Continual Light, Melf's Acid Arrow*
Level Three: *Spectral Force, Wraithform, Lorloveim's Creeping Shadow, Fly, Slow, Haste, Hold Person, Item*
Level Four: *Phantasmal Killer, Improved Invisibility, Stoneskin, Dimension Door*

Conde is a youthful-appearing man of twenty-two who has been a citizen of Ravens Bluff for fewer than two years. He became associated with Crystal and Percy through shared adventures, and expressed an interest in joining their carriage business as a limited partner. He is somewhat vain and fancies himself an investor, but to date has dispensed fewer than 1,000 gold pieces into this venture. He has pledged to make Mercury a success and is presently investigating additional business opportunities.

Conde is at heart a romantic. He is developing an interest in Polly Brightpond (see below), but Crystal and Percy have discouraged any thoughts he might have along these lines. He is usually fairly adept at hiding his Calishite accent, but at times, it slips through.He possesses superior agility of mind and limb, but occasionally stumbles when it comes to good judgment.

Most of the daily work is performed by Polly and Red, who live in the cottage. They are fraternal twins, 16 years of age, who were abandoned at birth. Prior to age eight, they lived in several orphanages, including the Hand of Mercy Children's Orphanage, until adopted by an elderly farm couple. A few months ago, Red was introduced to Crystal and Percy as someone skilled with horses. They found both him and his sister to be impressive young people and soon hired the two of them. Due to the failing health of their adopted father, they regularly take time off to visit him and his wife at their farm north of town.

Polly Brightpond
0-level female human

Str	7
Int	16
Wis	14
Dex	13
Con	11
Cha	14
Com	16

AC: 10
Hit Points: 4
Alignment: Neutral Good
Hair/Eyes: Blonde/Blue
Height: 5'6"
Weight: 120
Languages: Common, Elvish
THAC0: 20
Dmg: 1d2 (fist)

Weapon Proficiencies: none
Non-Weapon Proficiencies: Read/Write: Common (17), Cooking (16)

Polly is an attractive young lady who enjoys her job as Mercury's chef and part-time clerk. She is always smartly dressed and attentive to the needs of her customers. She maintains the interior of the cottage, greets visitors, and prepares a variety of epicurean delights. Much of her time is spent in the parlor attending customers. She spends as much of the rest of her time as possible in the kitchen refining her culinary skills.

Polly hopes to become a mage someday, and has secured a promise from Crystal to begin teaching her spellcraft and lore soon. She is especially intrigued by the creation of potions, and has always wanted to meet an alchemist.

"Red" Brightpond
0-level male human

Str	15
Int	13
Wis	14
Dex	17
Con	15
Cha	11
Com	10

AC: 7
Hit Points: 6
Alignment: Lawful Good
Hair/Eyes: Red/Hazel
Height: 6'2"
Weight: 180
Languages: Common
THAC0: 20
Dmg: 1d8 (long sword)

Weapon Proficiencies: Long Sword
Non-Weapon Proficiencies: Animal Handling (13), Animal Training - Horses, Dogs (14)

Red is so-called due to his straight, flame-colored hair (his real name, Renfro, is known only to Polly). He is a tall, lanky lad who is still growing. He is most comfortable outdoors, and prefers to spend his work time with the horses.

Red is a hard-working stable boy and handyman who takes great pride in his work. With much instruction and a little assistance from his elders, he tends to the horses, coach, and grounds. He has a remarkably calm manner which helps him greatly in controlling the horses and other animals. He misses the dogs on his step-parents' farm and hopes to convince the others that Mercury needs a guard dog or two.

Although he is not cut out to be a paladin, Red quickly developed a close friendship with Percy. Perhaps inspired by the spellcraft training his sister is to receive, Red has begun informal martial training with Percy. This instruction has been a blend of virtues and fighting skills. As such, it has emphasized discipline, decorum, respect, and swordsmanship in roughly equal parts. ❑

Say, Aren't You...?

A fame point system for LIVING CITY™ characters

Recognition of PC heroes in the LIVING CITY is something that is difficult to adjudicate fairly; a single player has many different judges, none of whom have ever heard of the player character. To correct this, we introduce a GM's option: the Fame Rating System.

How the System Works

Each PC will have a set of Fame ratings, each with a score that ranges from 1 to 19. When a PC meets an NPC in a tournament, the judge can choose to roll a d20 against the PC's Fame rating, exactly like a proficiency check. Success indicates that the NPC has heard of or knows the character. Since people tend to move within their own social classes and professional groups, Fame ratings are measured in eight categories, which account for the various social classes and quarters of the city.

Each category has a maximum Fame rating of 19, since there is always a chance that someone has never heard of a particular character.

Fame Categories

Lord Mayor (and the Deputy Mayor)
City Government (bureaucrats, etc.)
City Watch
Temples (any religious figures)
Upper Class
Merchant Class
Lower Class
General (this covers anyone not specifically covered by the other groups)

Characters can accumulate Fame points in tournament play based on their actions and with whom they interact. The tournament text will specify how to divide up the points. For example, a tournament might award two Fame points which can be divided among City Government, Temples or General. Within those categories, it is up to the player to decide how they are divided.

There are other ways to acquire Fame points:

- Bards and wizards who join the respective Guilds gain Fame benefits according to the Guild description.

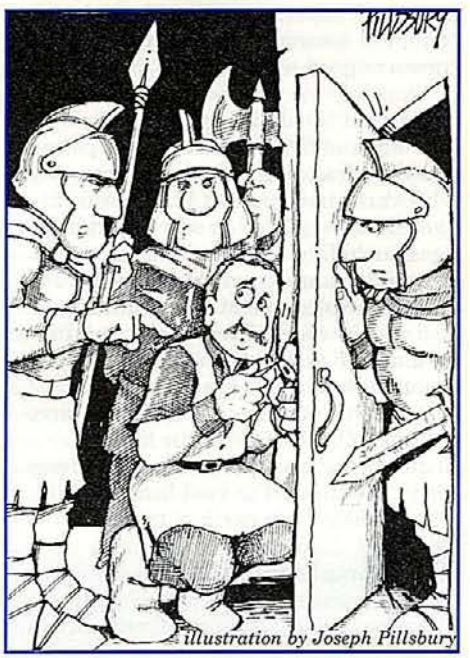


illustration by Joseph Pillsbury

- Knights gain three Fame points upon becoming a knight, and two for every additional knightly order they join.
- Knights and squires can gain one Fame point for every Chivalry Point awarded, and two for every Knightly Honor they receive. These may be divided among any appropriate categories.
- City Watch members earn three Fame points in the City Watch category and one in City Government. City Watch members further earn two Fame points in the City watch category per rank they advance in the Watch.
- Clerics of the civic deities can earn one Fame point per level, which must be applied to the Temples category.
- Characters with Charisma or Comeliness of 17 gain one Fame point, and those with Charisma or Comeliness of 18 gain two. Characters may receive Fame point for high scores in both stats. These may be applied to any category.

• Example: Sir Gilbert is a 5th level fighter. As a result of his 10 adventures, he has acquired 20 Fame points. He adds three for his knighthood and two for a knightly honor for a total of 25 Fame points. The player chooses to break these down as follows: Lord Mayor (3), City Government (4), City Watch (2), Temples (2), Upper Class (7), Merchant Class (4), Lower Class (0), General (3).

Grandfathering Fame

Characters existing prior to the 1996 WINTER FANTASY™ convention begin with five Fame points per level, which may be divided any way the player desires but should reflect the character's history and adventures. Dual-classed and multi-classed characters should add one to their highest level when computing their fame points. New characters created after February 8th, 1996, begin with no Fame points; they must make a name for themselves in play.

Using Fame (for Judges)

Judges may make Fame checks whenever a character encounters NPCs. Usually, the highest Fame rating among a group of characters should be used, but if that check is unsuccessful, then other checks could be appropriate.

Fame is primarily a role-playing aid, and should not confer a significant game benefit. Characters that are recognized, whether personally or by reputation, could receive advantages or disadvantages in an encounter; these should be reflected in role-playing. For example, a City Watch member could receive added cooperation while questioning a merchant who recognizes him; the merchant will certainly not sacrifice his own best interests, however. A priest recognized by the same merchant might get a chilly welcome if the merchant does not respect the priest's deity. Thieves and bards might be especially susceptible to the effects of Fame. A bard's livelihood is affected directly by his reputation, and a famous thief is often a captured thief. LC judges are encouraged to use Fame in situations where it might hinder characters as well as when it might help them.

A last word: don't get bogged down in Fame rolls. Use them when they seem appropriate, but the game shouldn't slow down because of Fame checks. Creative application of Fame can make Living City games more fun, and that is why we play, after all. ❑

A World of Your Own

High magic replaces high tech — on Earth!

by Roger E. Moore

The RPGA® Network's LIVING DEATH™ campaign highlights a special facet of our look at original AD&D® campaign creation, which is that our own planet can (and does) serve as the basis for many such campaigns. The RAVENLOFT® Gothic Earth setting is a perfect example of this point. This column and the next will investigate several such "magical Earths" and highlight their development and differences.

Gothic Earth is our Earth in the 1890s, with a streak of horror found in the RAVENLOFT set-up. Characters armed with pistols and spells hunt or are hunted by supernatural monsters. Special game mechanics (like fear, horror, madness, and powers checks, and the ever-popular curses) and DMs' tips on giving imaginative monster descriptions help intensify a sense of uncertainty and fear during play.

Other examples of magical Earths for the AD&D game are found in the green-cover Historical Reference Campaign Sourcebook series, published in 1991-1994. Each book takes a famous historical period in European civilization and details it for use as a campaign area. The series includes HR1 *Vikings*, HR2 *Charlemagne's Paladins*, HR3 *Celts*, HR4 *A Mighty Fortress*, HR5 *The Glory of Rome*, HR6 *Age of Heroes*, and HR7 *The Crusades*. The times covered range from the early Greek city-states in 2200 B.C. (in HR6) to the Thirty Years' War, in A.D. 1650 (in HR4). Some books overlap in time, covering different regions and cultures but creating a broad picture of Europe when used together—HR1 and HR2 in particular.

The HR series could easily describe the *same* magical Earth, since they generally share the same modifications to spellcasting (the "slow" AD&D system, you could call it). You could even attach Gothic Earth to these volumes as their "future history," as is done in the *Chronomancer* optional accessory, with minor historical changes.

But still other magical Earths have been presented or alluded to in TSR's fantasy games. This column presents one peculiar Earth wholly unconnected to the previous versions: the "modern" magical world depicted in the AMAZING ENGINE® MAGITECH® game. Because of the amount of development work required for this campaign and its complex nature, details on it will be continued into next month's column as well.

Magic in the Modern Age

Larry is one of a group of "round-robin" Dungeon Masters, as described in this column in POLYHEDRON® issue #111. Everyone else in his group is working away on their own campaigns, but Larry hasn't come up with a satisfactory one. Discouraged, he stands in front of his bookcase of games and looks it over for ideas. His eyes soon come to rest on his copy of the MAGITECH game.

Shame it's not for the AD&D game, he thinks. That was a crazy planet. After a moment, however, he remembers that the MAGITECH world's races, monsters, and some of its spells came directly from the AD&D game. He pulls out the booklet and looks at the cover: a minotaur in a t-shirt and a pistol-waving girl riding a flying carpet over a subdivision. Modern magic, eh? Larry is hooked.

He sits down and goes over the book with a pen, highlighting important points and adding his own notes. MAGITECH Earth has a history similar to our own, but with many fantastic elements thrown in. Minotaurs rule an independent Texas. The Mayans are elves; hobgoblins are neo-Aztecs. Lizard men rule southeast Asia. Europe and Japan are blasted, monster-filled ruins after World War II. The U.S. ends at the Mississippi River but includes what we call Quebec and the Maritime Provinces; Canada is Ontario and little more; Native Americans own the rest of North America. Venus (now called Hanahpu) was colonized by elves. Advanced magic replaces technology at every level of society; even children can cast minor spells. Electricity, fossil fuels, and gunpowder are not used. A crazy planet, indeed.

From the start, Larry decides his campaign world is *only* for visiting, not for long-term living. No PCs will be allowed to originate from this world. This is not the way most AD&D campaigns are created, but because the PCs in round-robin group jump from place to place, a visitors-only world is viable. Besides, the MAGITECH world is so advanced that Larry wants to avoid giving "primitive" PCs prolonged contact with it. He will have to watch the outflow of magical items and spells carefully so they won't severely disrupt anyone else's campaign setting!

Larry studies the big game map of ruined Europe and the smaller map of the Earth's nations. He considers basing the campaign in postwar Europe, with its mutant monsters and blasted cities—it looks like the GAMMA WORLD® game to him, and he loved that game. He hangs on to that thought, but he wants a more civilized starting point. He rejects the United States and other developed countries as being *too* civilized; handling so much magic could be troublesome, and the wild-and-woolly adventures that players like would be outlawed. His gaze drifts over to the island of Madagascar.

A high-school report on this island

Think Visually! An AD&D campaign set on a magical version of Madagascar presents...a chance to produce startling scenes, characters, creatures, and adventures that smack of high-adventure pulp movies.

comes to mind. Prehistoric fish live off the coast here. Giant flightless birds like moas once lived here, too, but the locals ate them all. Arabs who saw those birds came up with the tales of the roc. A famous pirate, Captain Kidd, used the island as a base. Some kind of apes called lemurs hang out in the jungles. This is not the most advanced country there is—but for adventuring purposes, that's good. The heroes can enter the world here, then be teleported or flown into the ruins of Europe on some secret mission.

Larry continues making notes. The following are some of the results.

Modifications: Larry is a cinematic DM. His motto is: Think Visually! An AD&D campaign set on a magical version of Madagascar presents him with a chance to produce startling scenes, characters, creatures, and adventures that smack of high-adventure pulp movies. Since next to nothing is said about Madagascar in the MAGITECH game, and because that world is heavily altered anyway, he feels free to improvise after referring only to an encyclopedia and a few books with color photographs of the island, its cities and countryside, and its peoples. And, because this *is* an island, it is a nice, tidy, "closed" environment, rich with foreign flavor.

First, some real-world information:

Madagascar is an enormous island (the fourth largest), covering 226,658 square miles—about the size of Texas. Oblong in shape, it is 980 miles north-south by 360 miles east-west. Its terrain includes rain forests on the east coast, a forested and grassy spine of mountains running north-south down the middle, thorn forests and brushland to the far south, and dry, open woodland and savanna to the west. The mountains are 5,000-10,000 feet high.

Most people here are either Indonesians, who crossed the Indian Ocean two millennia ago to settle here, or black Africans; most of the rest are of Arabic or French descent. These groups contain over a dozen smaller ethnic groups within them. Farming and nomadic herding are the primary occupations; fishing and hunting also supply food. The island was a native kingdom before it was taken over by France in 1885; French and Malagasy (an Indonesian tongue) are the main languages. Most locals practice tribal religious ceremonies involving cattle sacrifices, prayers at family tombs, and offerings to spirits; Christianity still runs second.

Madagascar, says Larry's encyclopedia, produces cattle, fish, sheep, pigs, peanuts, castor beans, coffee, corn, potatoes, rice, cassava, vanilla, cloves, salt, tobacco, sugar beets, sugar cane, textiles, graphite, semiprecious stones, kapok, rosewood, chromite, bauxite, coal, natural gas, oil, and . . . *uranium*. (Yes! thinks Larry.) It is rich with natural resources, but underdeveloped.

Larry will use much of this information to add depth and drama to the setting. The people and beliefs of this land appear strange to most Western eyes—but this is great. Larry wants the players (through their PCs) to feel a bit alienated and out of place, which will make them nervous and put an edge on events. Lists of nouns and adjectives are made for use in descriptions—the look of the landscape, the sounds of a village, the dress of the people, the smell and taste of the food. He culls out some French phrases that will be useful and practices them. A lucky break comes when he finds a good travelogue video on Madagascar, and he watches it twice to get strong descriptive passages from it.

In the end, Larry's Madagascar is not much like the real one. The Indonesians become green-scaled Khmer lizard men. Black humans are Zimbabwe migrants, the French are dwarves, and the Arabs

are Muslim humans. French rule ended when Europe was destroyed by Adolf Hitler in 1945. The islanders then reinstated their old monarchy, created a new flag, and kept a mild anti-European (anti-dwarf) prejudice. Tribal religions work fine, giving the land a pagan, unfamiliar feel. (Larry doesn't detail this part greatly, preferring it stay mysterious and unknowable.)

Further, Larry's Madagascar is on the creepy, criminal side. A blind eye is turned toward illegal activities if the price is right. Spies, gangsters, and fugitives congregate here. Every major NPC has at least one dark secret, and things are never what they seem. A black market thrives in stolen magical goods, gems, spices, rare wood, and that peculiar element, uranium. Poachers sell the eggs, young, hides, and skulls of rare monsters. Some rich, debased plantation owners employ slaves—local convicts, zombies, kidnapped foreigners, or even intelligent lemurs. Official secrets smuggled out of African and Asian nations are sold to foreign powers here through diplomatic channels, and the lizard-man king of Madagascar offers land and gold to those who sell secrets to *him*. Thieves loot prehistoric ruins in the wilderness, braving unnamed horrors for art objects to sell to museums overseas. Necromancers and mad wizards are rumored to live in isolated caves. Civil liberties are changed or repealed at whim. It's a wild and corrupt land, but a lively, challenging, and rewarding one, too.

Additionally, Larry resurrects the elephant birds (the huge flightless birds extinct in our own world), which are now herded and even ridden by locals. Also resurrected are large, extinct species of jungle-dwelling lemurs, some up to gorilla size, that Larry read about in a science magazine. After collecting data on lemurs in general, he makes them fairly intelligent, giving them speech, culture, and Stone Age weapons—and a hostile attitude toward others. The deep seas around Madagascar contain prehistoric creatures from hundreds of millions of years ago, with things far more dangerous than the large, blue coelacanths discovered there in our real world. (Coelacanths were once thought to have died out before dinosaurs ever appeared.)

Larry highlights details that bring out the contrasts of this island. Airports, hydroelectric plants, and railroads are rare; primitive tools are common. A few skyscrapers rise from the heart of Antananarivo, the capital, but they are surrounded by the countless shacks of the poor. Rich and poor, ancient and modern, obvious and mysterious, natural and manmade, colorful lights and trashy streets, suspicious natives and lying merchants: Larry develops a movielike view of this land that he will weave into all adventures here. This is *not* a comfortable place, but it is an exciting, intriguing one.

As topping, Larry tosses in a few modified AD&D game monsters. Talking birds in the jungle, giant ants and giant vultures on the savanna, and stirges, giant eagles, manticores, and rocs in the mountains are added. He designs a variant race of kuo-toa found along the coast, devoted enemies of humanity but little known so far. He alters all standard monsters to keep players on edge, like the miniature vampiric bulettes that infest the sewer system, or the brightly colored rot grubs that look and smell like flowers until you reach down to pick them. For fun, he gives the island a dozen species of carnivorous plants, and assumes the importation of African creatures like zebras, giraffes, and gazelles, which are domesticated and herded.

Larry allows room for placing other sentient races on the island in the future, such as aarakocra in the mountains, tabaxi and tasloi in the jungle, and so forth. These races, however, will be few in number, dirt poor, and usually hostile to foreigners.

Climate and weather are carefully worked into the adventures. Larry wants the players to feel the dry, baking heat or the wild, thundering rain. He even keeps a calendar and adds festival days for more local flavor. Whatever day it is in the real world when an adventure is played is also that day on his version of Madagascar. He keeps in mind especially that Madagascar, being in the southern hemisphere, is hottest in December and coolest in July.

Mapping the island is not a great problem. A color photocopier is used to blow up maps for better detail, and Larry carefully transfers all relevant data to a desktop-sized, square-grid map for his own use. He also prepares a small, somewhat inaccurate and less-descriptive map for the players (their PCs can buy such maps anywhere on the island) and creates some sketches or photo montages of local scenes.

The most complex problem Larry faces, however, is in creating AD&D characters for this world using some of the MAGITECH rules on character-building. Considerable freedom is available here, since he is dealing only with NPCs, not PCs, and can thus bend the rules quite a bit more. He eventually decides that adult civilized MAGITECH NPCs all start off with 8 hp and are the equivalent of multiclassed 1st-level fighter/thief/cleric/wizards. This comes as a result of their extensive education; the people aren't really holy priests or robbers, but they can use spells once made only for clerics, and they have athletic powers and mechanical skills like thieves.

These citizens can then advance in any of these classes with further experience and training, or by using magical enhancements. Special classes (bards, specialist wizards, rangers, etc.) can be substituted for one of the basic four classes in highly trained individuals (e.g., a commando sergeant who is a 6/7/4/5-level ranger-thief-druid-wizard). People from less-civilized regions, like most of Madagascar, have the standard AD&D classes, one or two each per the usual rules. The PCs, no matter <what> they do, will not be able to gain similar powers.

On top of this, NPCs (civilized or not) have occupations and batches of skills. Larry freely gives out skills to NPCs with regard only to appropriateness and logic. He imagines that the players will have fits when their PCs are treated by doctors who use sagelike knowledge and priest spells but are neither sages nor priests—but giving the players fits is, after all, part of the joy of being a clever DM.

Larry looks over the MAGITECH spells and converts most of them to AD&D statistics in rough form. He is careful to read the sections in the \MAGITECH rules about anti-magic elements, math and magic, Psyche Focus spellcasting methods, spell storing, and so forth, and he incorporates these into the roleplaying of his NPCs. The PCs will go nuts trying to get such powers—to no avail. They might be able to get some of the spells, though, and this is fine.

The world is shaping up nicely. Now for a major-league, terror-filled, character-killing adventure. (Larry's group has high-level PCs, and he doesn't want to disappoint them.)

Next issue: The Shining Man, *the conclusion of Roger's* MAGITECH *Earth articles.*

❑

Port of Call

The city–state of Caryllon for the *Everway* game

by Rob Nicholls

The rotund man primly removed a pinch of reeking powder from the silver box and placed it to his nostrils, inhaling deeply. Instantly the fleshy folds of his face underwent a variety of contortions as sinus passages rebelled against the foul intrusion of snuff. Yet despite a number of promising starts, the Portmaster did not sneeze.

Captain Shard was not very patient with self–important fools, and surely this fat pompous human which called itself the "Portmaster of Caryllon" was such a person. Fool or not, though, the man was backed by a shipload of armed marines. With his own ship damaged by battle and their supplies exhausted by flight, Shard and his crew had few options. They had to put in at this unfamiliar port of Caryllon or face almost certain death upon the seas.

"Now then, Captain Shard," the Portmaster began in his exceedingly nasal voice. To Shard, that voice was worse than hundreds of claws scraping black slate. "Your cargo is indeed unique to our fair realm and should fetch a fine price in our markets. However, " and the smile upon the Portmaster's face caused Shard's to harden, "even that estimated sum would not cover the required fees and taxes necessary to allow you to dock."

"WHAT?!", exploded Shard. His lunge was checked by the sight of the Caryllon archers standing ready behind the Portmaster. "I bring a cargo of fine goods to your city and you tell me it will cost more than I own to bring it in?! What kind of place is this?"

Again the nasal voice grated, "Please, Captain Shard," and that vile smile widened, "I'm sure we can come to some sort of ... arrangement."

Ears laid back in anger, Shard glared in white fury at the human. The fire within wanted to rend the fool to bits and feast on the pieces. But the cool air of logic spoke of advantage and patience. It took several long moments, but logic won. Through sharp and gritted teeth, Shard laid a sneer across his feline face and hissed, "What did you have in mind?"

Wizards of the Coast, renowned for their *Magic: The Gathering* card game, recently produced the *Everway* role playing game. In this system, players take on the role of "Spherewalkers," beings with the ability to open "gates" between "spheres" or worlds. This allows for a virtually endless array of people, creatures, and cultures to be mapped out by players and their imaginative gamemaster. Each sphere is divided into a number of "realms", which can be anything from a single city-state to a huge nation. The following article details one such realm which can be imported into any *Everway* game. Captain Shard and his crew found it to be an "interesting" place. We hope you will find it so as well.

Virtue: Overlooking the Diamond-Reversed (recognizing opportunity). The inhabitants of Caryllon are quick to see ways to turn a circumstance to their benefit. "Fortune from misfortune" is a very common phrase in Caryllon, often said to encourage the listener to find a way to profit from a bad situation.

Fault: The Priestess-Reversed (impracticality). Sometimes Caryllonians will go to unreasonable lengths or measures to achieve their goals, especially when they have suffered from an extended period of "misfortune". Those who succumb to this fault are like the compulsive gamblers who bet themselves into ruin, always thinking the next gamble will be their "lucky break".

Fate: Fertility (growth vs.decline). If the people of Caryllon continue to make the most of opportunities even in the face of adversity, they can expect to thrive and grow. However they must proceed with wisdom, lest they "lose the bird in the hand" by trying to catch the two in the bush.

Usurper: Greed. In seeking to make the most of their opportunities, many Caryllonians have come to equate success with wealth, status, and power. Almost everyone, from lowly dockworker to the highest court official all seek to improve their end of any deal or arrangement. Until one learns the ways of the realm (not to mention how to read "the fine print") outsiders are cautioned to be careful. The bureaucracy is renowned for charging "special" taxes and fees upon visitors and city officials not only expect to be bribed, they sometimes demand it!

Rule: Caryllon is ruled by a hereditary king or queen, the throne usually passing to the monarch's youngest child. Thus a ruler of Caryllon may have several children until he or she begets one that, in their opinion, will make a proper successor. The current monarch of Caryllon is King Hugh, a jolly and rotund old man much loved by the populous. As king, he naturally has the most wealth, status, and power in the realm and thus feels no need to milk anymore out of the land or visitors to it. He has no interest in cleaning up the octopus-like bureaucracy of his city, as it actually does work for the most part and Hugh firmly believes in "not fixing what isn't broke". However if heroes or visitors can obtain an audience, he is likely to be generous to those who have been pinched hard by his civil servants. Hugh is a widower and has no intentions of taking another wife as he believes his only son Vance will make a suitable king someday.

Religion: Various deities are worshiped in Caryllon as the inhabitants are tolerant of most religions. But as the city relies heavily upon trade from sea-routes, sea gods are the most prominent, especially Poseidon (Greek) and Lir (Celtic). Well-traveled spherewalkers may find it interesting that most of the temples and shrines of Caryllon are managed by an extended group known as the Moondance family. Not all members of this family are related by blood or marriage, but all of them are clerics or priestesses of some sort. The current head of the Moondance family is a well-respected elder known simply as "Father". It is widely rumored that he has dreams of a mystical nature and will send members of the family out upon quests regarding these visions.

People: While a wide variety of humans may be found in this bustling port, most of Caryllon's native inhabitants are fair-skinned with sea-colored eyes (blue or green) and straight hair. Social status is based upon one's position, wealth, or standing. Merchants are very well respected and command a great deal of influence, provided that their ventures bring a profit and the proper bribes are delivered to certain members of the bureaucracy. Those who suffer ill fortune or allow their debts to accumulate may find themselves less respected than the servant class. Government employees can achieve a great deal of status depending upon how much influence they milk out of their posts. In general, those who work for themselves are always more respected than those in someone else's employ.

Economy: Trade is the staple of Caryllon's economy as the city is located relatively close to three gates (two land-based and one at sea), as well as being surrounded by several other realms. Caravans and ships travel in all directions bringing in a variety of goods, some of which are fairly exotic. Pieces of metal (gold, silver, and iron) are the most common means of exchange, although "letters of credit" and "promise notes" are widely used by the city bureaucracy. Coins known as "ooks" are the smallest denomination, followed by "double ooks" (double-sized coins), and "orbs" (spheres the size of walnut). Trading consortiums control most of the goods flowing into or out of the city. It is common practice for all the ships, wagons, and other transports of a consortium to be painted completely in that consortium's colors, so everyone can tell who is doing what at a glance. The bureaucracy cashes in on this idea by requiring all the minted money of a consortium to be engraved with that consortium's symbol. Thus when large amounts of hard currency exchange hands, the merchants must pay the city to have their money recast as well as any taxes or fees upon their goods.

War: A small but well-equipped standing army maintains law and order throughout the city. Caryllon also boasts a number of warships and patrol craft. However the military is part of the city government and just like their civilian counterparts, these soldiers are usually looking for ways to advance their rank, wealth and status.

Magic: The various members of the Moondance family use the magic associated with their chosen deities. There are a few other mages within Caryllon, most of whom sell their services to the highest bidder. Recently these wizards banded together to form a consortium known as the Guild of Magery, in order to resist political maneuvering on the part of the City Tax Bureau.

Technology: Steel and iron are used for most implements, although the wealthy have a number of objects, including cloth, cunningly crafted from precious metals. Wood from the surrounding forests is also put to a wide variety of uses, such as ships, wagons, barrels, etc. Some homes are made of wood or clay, but most of the city architecture is of quarried stone.

Learning: The wealthy hire private tutors for their children while the middle-class and the poor will either teach their children themselves or find someone to take them as apprentices. Many get their start in government this way, but rarely do those starting at the bottom ever reach the upper levels of the bureaucracy.

Domesticated Animals: Horses, oxen, and torcs (large yellow lizard-like creatures) serve as beasts of burden. Goats, pigs, chicken, cattle, and fish are plentiful. Birds are usually only found as pets of the more prosperous families, while dogs and cats are common amongst the lower classes.

Common Foods: Surrounding farms and the sea provide most of Caryllon's larder. Eggs, cheese, wine, and certain sea foods (crab, lobster, etc) are expensive. The large amount of trade that flows through the city means that various exotic foods (such as chocolate) may also be found, but only at a high price.

Outsider Contact: The brisk trade that Caryllon enjoys means that its people have been exposed to a wide variety of travelers and their customs. However, most citizens are more than willing to exploit the ignorance or generosity of strangers to their realm. Indeed, many visitors may consider the city especially hostile or corrupt after meeting with its civil or military officials. However, those who persevere will discover that for Caryllon, that is simply "business as usual". ❑

Elminster's Everwinking Eye

The Sage of Shadowdale returns!

by Ed Greenwood

Back again, are ye? I thought there was a strange smell in here...
—Maeryndos Tethet,
Master of Novice Jewellers
at Sparkling Hall
in Blackalblade
as portrayed in the play
Three Black Horses
by the bard Ivryn Olindarr
(written in the Year of the Prince)

Strange flashes of light in and around my little sleeping hut back in the woods heralded the opening of a *gate* from another world: Elminster at play again. Thankfully for the safety of my neighbors, Elminster closed the *gate* (and stopped blowing smoke rings through a little innovation of his known as *lightning rings*, a nasty but impressive–looking little spell I'll tell you all about some other time) soon after his arrival, and amused himself by drinking all he could find of the various liqueurs and other drinkables I'd stored up there so he wouldn't find them in my study. (Sigh!)

His first words to me out of the cloud of pipesmoke I found upon my arrival were: "So there ye are! If ye weren't getting so damnably fat, mayhap ye could stagger up through the trees a mite faster, eh?"

"I'm pleased to see ye—er, you, too, Old Mage," I replied with what I'd like to think was gentle sarcasm, and added, "and to prove it, I've brought up something we call turkey à la king—fresh–made, piping hot, and all that, so watch thy—uh, your tongue."

"Oh, aye? Ye call it turkey à la king, but what meat's really in it? And how d'ye usually cook kings, anyway?" He lifted the lid, peered, and answered his own query: "Umm. Under a crust of soup–dumplings, it seems."

Ignoring the ladle I held out to him, he plunged one long, spider–like finger into the crust, transfixing it as if his finger was a dagger, and pulled. When enough of the steaming stew beneath had been revealed to plunge his finger in, he did that, licked it clean, and pursed his lips consideringly. "Not bad. Needs sage."

"And that's why you're here?" I asked quickly, flashing him my best idiot's smile.

Elminster frowned back at me. "A little less humor of that sort, if you don't mind." He crossed his old, dirty boots atop the best table in the place, scratched the end of his nose thoughtfully with his pipe, and asked, "So where were we?"

"You were telling me about the Border Kingdoms," I said, watching unseen forces tip the dish of turkey stew and shape its contents into a brown funnel in the air, awaiting a leisurely descent into the Old Mage's mouth (at least, I hoped that's where it would end up), "but you've been away for awhile, and I was starting—"

Elminster waved a hand. "I was busy. Ye'll hear all about it in a decade, if ye're old enough then. Now, I'd just reached Beldargan, proceeding alphabetically, so we may as well go on from there..."

"Ah, yes, Mighty Lord Elminster," I replied in my most humble voice. "Of course."

Elminster gave me a sharp look, and began a non–stop onrushing narrative (a stream of verbiage that, as usual, leapt from topic to topic with bewildering speed and random aim) that I've condensed down into snippets, viz:

Beldargan

This town has been (and remains) fiercely independent of the neighboring Barony of Blacksaddle. Often harried by brigands sweeping down out of the Shaar, it consists of many stone cottages and attached stone–walled orchards that climb the steep flanks of a natural hill crowned by a tiny ring–fort and central stone keep (a single square tower bristling with catapults, known as Beldarg's Folly). Beldarg was a warrior from ages past. He had a bristling beard, tusk–like protruding teeth, a big nose, and a surly manner—all of which have been preserved in local childrens' jokes...but his fate and doings have been forgotten down the years. The orchards of Beldargan grow large, sour green apples, used by the locals in the making of sauces, potent and fiery green wine, cider that's if anything even more like liquid fire, and to fatten the shaggy–coated sheep they tend on the nearby Shaar and its downslopes.

Stone fences, zig–zag turn–and–turn–back– again entrances (rather than flammable wooden gates) and turf–roofed dugout huts are typical of local building once away from the central hill and the ring of pleasant manors that surround it and its attendant ponds.

Turn–and–turn–back–again entries are openings in field walls too narrow for an ox, cow, sheep—or fat man—to fit through: they open into a narrow passage turning diagonally back into the wall, which then sharply doubles back on itself to reach the outer world. A typical exit from a field consists of walking past a jutting post and turning sharply to the left, into a passage perhaps five feet long, wheeling around another post to come diagonally back the way you came for about three feet, and then doubling back around a third post to parallel the same route once more, heading outbound around a last 'windcutter' post. These zig–zag entries are made with stone posts erected in pairs to bracket upright stone slabs or slates: two strong men can raise these up and out of their 'keeper' posts to reveal a much wider opening. This sort of entrance cuts drafts and prevents animals from wandering. When farmers want to get stock in and out, they use whips and cudgels for herd control, and

'slide out the slabs.' these slabs can be locked to prevent unauthorized slab removal. There are many tales of hidden treasures behind loose stones—and waiting traps, both mechanical and magical—in the cozy confines of turn–and–turn–back–again passages.

The conical, 300'–high central hill of Beldargan's Mount, which is home to over 450 of the 650 or so inhabitants of the town, is surrounded by a ring of deliberately planted thorn hedge, pierced in three places by gates (stone arches whose stone doors can be wedged solidly open or shut). A miniature barbican fitted with arbalests (capable of transfixing several horses and their riders with one of their giant quarrels) stands just inside each gate, commanding a clear view through it and along the road leading to it. Forty households in town are forgiven all taxes in return for providing trained, fully–equipped armsmen to man the gates at all times, and defend the town when the war–horns are sounded (from the keep or by one of three senior patrol–leaders who have them). Beldargan is seldom directly attacked these days, but its peace is almost certainly the result of its readiness for battle; in earlier times it was often raided several dozen times a year, and occupied (an outlying cottage or two if not the entire settlement) twice or more every cold season.

Springs rise in the heart of the Mount (which is said to be honeycombed by the keep dungeons, cottage cellars, and natural caverns, that all meet in a crazy maze of damp underground ways leading deep down into the earth...even, some whisper, to the Realms Below). These springs form streams which cascade down the slopes of the Mount in lovely little gardens of moss–planted spillways and stepped stone–lined plunge–pools emptying one into the next. In these waters the folk of the town keep edible fish (blackfins, mostly) and snails. The local delicacy of Beldargan Groundworms and Snails in Pepper Butter sounds revolting, but is a mouth-watering must; the groundworms taste like roasted pecans!

Townsfolk also bridge these waters with tiny arched, covered follies, and in them—or from overhanging tree limbs—hang small crystals and shaped metal chimes over the tinkling waters to flash reflected sunlight or moonlight across their vestpocket–sized gardens. Many cottages are built into the hill, and seem to grow out of the heart of an endless garden—and at dawn the hill is often alive with birdsong.

The Mount is a little spire of beauty in the otherwise rugged downslope country, which tends more to cairns, bramble clumps, and wary, well–armed shepherds—whose youngsters sit on the heights of land doing duty as sentinels. (Perhaps 250 or so folk live in the outlying farms that look to Beldargan for protection and supplies—and render taxes to its patrol–riders. In the outlying farmlands (known as 'the Horn Meadows' for this reason, although it is rare to hear a local say more than 'out Meadow way' or 'somewhere in the Meadows'), horns typically signal the approach of any traveler, large animal, or band. Visitors who ask for lodging are directed to the inn just east of the Mount, The Drowned Witch The inn was so named, it is said, for an unfortunate sorceress who died in the communal pond some eighty years ago, when the enchanted flying broom she was riding was struck by the malicious magic of a rival, and dove down into the waters at great speed. This descent is repeated in silent, phantom form on moonless nights, local folk swear, when an elder citizen of the town is about to die.

The inn also serves as the town tavern, a paddock for the mounts and draft animals of the village, and the wagons and beasts of visitors. It is also a rooming house for the many hiresworks based in Beldargan when brigand raids are bad, or "grasping Blacksaddle grows belligerent," as the proprietor, old Enderl Dalvin, puts it. Dalvin is a retired warrior who stands almost seven feet tall when he straightens up fully (a rare occurrence), and is known as a deft axe–hurler: more than one headstone out by the pond marks the last bed of an orc or brigand who mistakenly thought the Witch lightly defended.

Many adventurers doing a little brigand–hunting or seeking the legendary Lost Mine of Hollowhill make Beldargan their base—and a few have so fallen in love with it that they've retired here—among them a once–powerful priest of Chauntea by the name of Alamar Skunder, whose magic and diplomacy remain strong even if he's set aside all his influence in wider Faerûn, and at least one mage of note: Taranda of the Hooks (named for the cruel battle–spells she devised, that either haul foes into her reach, or stab and tear at their flesh; these days, she spends her time—or so it is reported—in quiet study and sculpting windstone chimes).

The Lost Mine is said to be a linked series of eight or nine caverns whose walls glisten with sapphires—enough to make several kingdoms rich for a century. Discovered by Barask Hollowhill over three centuries ago, it was hidden by magic he hired, walled away behind rock and earthshifting magic so that it could only be entered through an invisible gate: a 'Moon Door' open only on certain moonlit nights, that can only be passed through by someone entering a particular spot from a certain direction. This entrance is said to be somewhere very close to Beldargan, in the open country on the slopes of the Shaar—but just where the Door is, and when it opens, are secrets that were lost when Barask disappeared.

Legend whispers that he died (or was murdered) in his mine, and now awaits would–be plunderers as its undead guardian...and some folk also say that the land has sunk or worn away since the Door was made, and it can only be found now by someone who erects a ladder in the proper place. Taranda is reported to have dismissed this latter saying as a cruel local joke put about by someone who just wanted to watch armored adventurers step off ladders and crash to the ground repeatedly, for their own amusement.

If someone has found the mine, they haven't sold, shown around, or given away its gems in any great quantity, anywhere in western Faerûn...at least, not yet.

Blackalblade

Capital of the young but haughty realm of Ondeeme (named for the merchant–mage of Schamedar who founded it), this walled town isn't much larger than a grand and sprawling castle, but assumes all the airs (complete with arcane laws, fast–cudgel guardsmen, and ridiculous fashions) of Calimport and other prosperous, decadent cities of the South.

Blackalblade's wealth began with the wool–trade and weavers, enriched by working for (and having their designs enchanced by) the mages and would–be mages (wastrel youngest sons of rich Calishite merchants) Ondeeme gathered around himself. When Ondeeme and his school were shattered and destroyed overnight (by an attacking Red Wizard, some say, or a furious Calishite rival, others swear; still other sources insist it was a spell–duel or

dark summoning that got out of hand, or that something known only as the Night Parade was involved), the weavers were well established—but wise enough to attract more sedentary wizards to dwell in (and thereby defend) their city by generous offers of a free residence and special treatment under local laws.

Wizards they got (notably Hlaundurym of the family Asarda of Chessenta), and the merchants engaged in a brief, ruthless power struggle, ended up with a ruling council of eight headed by three well–balanced rivals ("Lord" Astlur Adaunt, "the Old Matron" Nardarra Leonpur, and Ylothin Tlarst), and set about building up the wealth and importance of their city.

Fine–forgers and jewellers gathered in Blackalblade because of the good gem supplies from mines in the Raundawn Hills northwest of the city (and from elsewhere in the Border Kingdoms). The wily merchants of the city hired famous gemcutters such as Ildyn Onsypir of Athkatla and Urthe Crownshimmer of Baldur's Gate to come to Blackalblade and live like kings in the first formal school of gemcutting and jewelry–making, Sparkling Hall. This establishment has fast acquired a reputation for hauteur extreme even in Blackalblade, for the excellence of its stylish products (now adorning many a noble breast, throat, wrist, and shoulder from one end of Faerûn to the other), and for the sadistic cruelty of its Masters to their pupils.

The town is named for a notorious pirate, the balding, fiercely–moustachioed, and fat Kururn Blackalblade, who built the first—now–vanished—house here long ago, and died in it at the ripe old age of one hundred and twenty–six winters! Blackalblade is laughed at as a ridiculously pompous copy of the worst of much larger and older 'civilized' lands. Borderers from other places are careful not to show such feelings while within the city's high–towered walls, however—Blackalans have high prices, quick tempers, and harsh laws. Floggings, confiscations of goods, and draggings down the cobbled streets to the nearest gate at a fast drag, bound on the end of a rope pulled by a well–whipped horse, are among the more popular punishments levied against outsiders who annoy the merchants of Blackalblade.

They in turn look down on the 'back country hay–heads' who come visiting for 'a look at the good life' from less fortunate lands (that is, everywhere else in the Border Kingdoms). Blackalblade is one of the wealthiest places in the region, and 'the' place to buy odd, arcane, expensive and fashionable things; the hunger of its citizens—and those who come to town to shop—keeps the port of Thur very busy. ❑

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Reynolds Jones
With Friends Like You ... (FR)
Tom Prusa and Dawn Snell

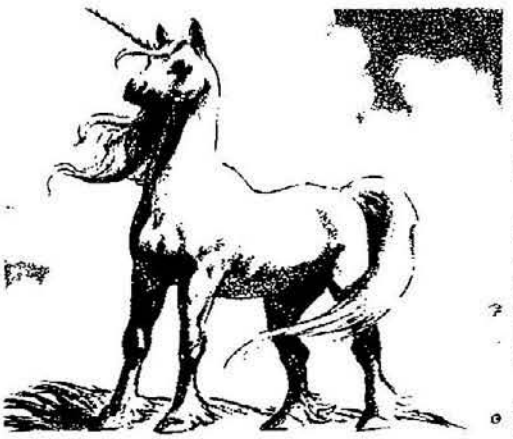
Forgotten Deities

Beast cults: The Lion and the Unicorn

by Eric Boyd

Lurue the Unicorn, "Silverymoon"

Power: Demi-
Plane: Prime, Beastlands
AoC: Talking beasts and intelligent creatures
Align: CG
WAL: (C)G
Symbol: Unicorn head against the background of a half moon
Sex: Female.



Lurue is believed to be the daughter of Eachthighern, Lord of Unicorns and Pegasi. (This deity is described in DMGR4, *Monster Mythology*, p. 100. He is not commonly worshipped in the Realms, but a minor avatar of his may serve as one of the Earthmother's children, Kamerynn the Unicorn, in the Moonshae Isles.) Lurue spends her time wandering between the Prime Material Plane, often in the region of the city of Silverymoon, and the Beastlands of the Outer Planes. Lurue is closely allied with Mielikki, and often serves that goddess as a steed. She detests the dark deity Malar, and will battle with his avatar or his servants at any opportunity. Lurue is the elder sister of Yathaghera, the Winged Queen, a demigoddess and ruler of the pegasi and unicorns of Evermeet.

Lurue has no specialty priests *per se*, but she is revered by most of the goodly intelligent beasts of the Realms. Many of her most loyal followers include unicorns and talking owls. A few humans and demihumans adventure in her name; the most famous such group is known as the Knights of the Unicorn, based out of Baldur's Gate. Lurue occasionally appears in a sacred grove known as the Place of the Unicorn, located northeast of Leilon.

As a beast cult deity, Lurue can grant particularly devout followers the ability to summon aid in times of great need. Humans and demihuman followers are most likely to be granted the wise counsel of a talking owl, while intelligent beasts may receive the aid of the Silver Herd. The Silver Herd is a band of over 12 unicorns of maximum hit points led by a particularly noble unicorn stallion said to be a direct descendant of Lurue herself. If sent to aid a worshipper, the Silver Herd will magically appear on the horizon and gallop to the worshipper's aid. A stampede of angry unicorns is usually enough to drive off most antagonists threatening an intelligent beast.

In time of great crisis, Lurue might grant besieged worshippers the quest spell *animal horde*. All the animals summoned would be intelligent creatures or talking beasts, and would definitely include the Silver Herd.

Nobanion

Power: Demi-
Plane: Prime, Beastlands
AoC: Good-hearted beasts of the Realms
Align: LG
WAL: G (non-evil beasts)
Symbol: Lion's head
Sex: Male.

Nobanion, also known as Lord of the Guthmere Woods and the King of the Beasts, is typically depicted as powerful lion or a majestic lammasu. Legends claim that his jaws, once clamped shut, cannot be opened by any force in the mortal world. Ancient texts also refer to him as the Lion King or Aslan. Some legends claim Nobanion entered the Realms through one of many magical pools in the Weathercote Woods, each of which acts as a *gate* to another world. All lammasu, both greater and lesser, are believed to be his offspring in the Realms.

Nobanion dwells with a pack of female greater lammasu in the Beastlands, where he holds court with representatives of all the beasts, great and small. On frequent occasions the Lion King wanders the Guthmere Woods, surveying his territory in the Realms.

During the Time of Troubles, Nobanion battled briefly with the avatar of Malar and drove him west and north. Following their inconclusive battle, Nobanion wandered south to the plains of Shar, expanding his territory. Several tribes of wemics encountered in the south by the King of the Beasts have begun to venerate Nobanion, and it is believed a few noble wemics have entered his service as paladins. In a time of great danger, Nobanion might send a lammasu servant to aid a devoted follower battling against overwhelming evil.

Nobanion's Priests
All of Nobanion's priests are actually wemic paladins. Nobanion has no specialty priests or other clergy except for this emerging order of paladin holy warriors. Only a few such holy warriors actually exist, and the few that do are concentrated in the region immediately south of the Guthmere woods. It is possible that a paladin follower of Nobanion might emerge among the Cat Lords, but no such creature has been encountered as of yet.

Requirements
AB as paladin; **AL** LG: **WP** any; **AR** as wemic; **RA** feathered headdress and long mane: **SP** All, Animal, Combat, Elemental*, Healing, Law, Plant*, Weather*, War; **SPL** nil; **PW** as paladin, except cannot call a warhorse, 5) lion's roar (treat as a great shout spell, (W8); **TU** as paladin; **QS** animal horde (entire horde composed of lions).

DRAGON DICE™ Tournament Rules

Standard floor rules as of 1 January 1996

Basic Requirements: One Judge, with as many Assistants as needed.

Judge's job: Interpret rules, choose a winner when a round runs long (one round must begin and end within a given convention time slot; if a round runs long, decide winner based on terrain captured; if no terrain has been captured or more than one player has captured a terrain, the largest point total of "live" dice determines the winner), declare forfeiture, keep records. The Judge is the final arbiter. His word is law.

Assistant's job: Answer rules questions, traffic control, assign identifiers to each contestant, record results, anything else the Judge requires.

Judge and Assistants are barred from playing in the tournament.

Except as noted below, all standard rules (from the DRAGON DICE Rule Book and any official TSR errata and clarifications) are used.

Rules Clarifications

• The ID icon of each unit counts as a number of points equal to the unit's health: a common unit's ID icon counts as one point of effect; an uncommon unit's counts as two points of effect, a rare unit's ID icon counts as three points of effect, and a monster's ID icon counts as four points of effect. (*Special 1:* The Sprite Swarm's ID icon counts as four points of effect and the die is rolled again, adding that effect as well. *Special 2:* The dragonmaster's TSR logo counts as four points of effect, just as its ID icon does.)

• The cost of each spell is increased by one point. For example, the *Stoneskin* spell costs two points, the *Lightning Bolt* spell costs four points, and the *Summon Dragon* spell costs seven points.) Use the Tournament Reference Folder, as it has the correct spell costs listed on it.

• Magic from a player's reserve army can be cast only on that player's armies and units. Other player's dice cannot be targeted by that army's reserve magic.

• An army cannot cast magic that inflicts damage on another army belonging to the same player.

• If an army is both routed and destroyed, the attacker may still pursue.

• If a player has no units remaining in play, any spells he has in play are immediately negated.

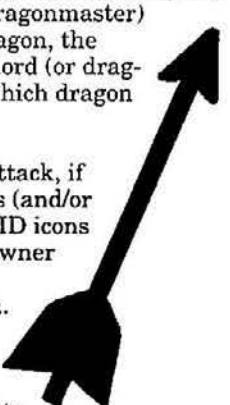
• When an army's roll is to be both doubled and halved, all halving occurs before any doubling.

• Possession of a temple face prevents any new black spells from targeting the possessing army; it does not negate those already affecting that army.

• Possession of a temple face does not preclude a black dragon from being sent to that terrain.

• A dragon controlled by a dragonlord or dragonmaster can be summoned (per the spell) away from that control. In such a case, it can even be summoned to the terrain it currently occupies.

• During an attack by multiple dragons, if a dragonlord (or dragonmaster) takes control of a dragon, the owner of the dragonlord (or dragonmaster) chooses which dragon is controlled.



• During a dragon attack, if multiple dragonlords (and/or dragonmasters) roll ID icons or TSR logos, their owner decides which takes control of the dragon.

• If an army is attacked by multiple dragons, it may count its melee results against one and its missile results against another, possibly killing both with the same roll.

DRAGON DICE Sealed Box Tournament Rules

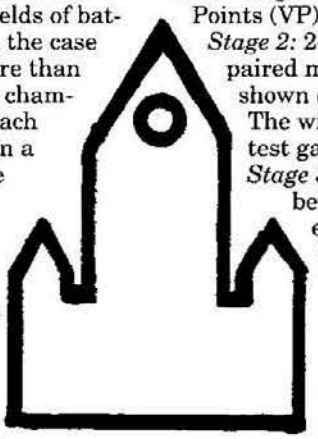
Each field of battle consists of 16 players. These 16 players are divided into 2-player contests; these contests continue through four rounds of play, as defined below.

Each contestant brings one or two unopened, shrink-wrapped boxes to play. In some tournaments, contestants are required to bring their own unopened boxes to the table. In others, contestants will be required to purchase unopened boxes from an authorized

dealer at the convention. This is determined by specific conventions and announced prior to the start of the convention.

Round One consists of three individual games. The winner of Round One is the contestant who wins two of the three games. The winner advances to Round Two. If a contestant loses a game during Round One, he may change to his second, still-unopened box (if he brought two boxes to play). If a contestant decides to change, he must use the second box through the duration of the tournament. Dice from one box may not be mixed with dice from the other. Rounds Two, Three, and Four consist of single elimination games, with the winners of each round advancing to the next.

In a one-field tournament (16 players), the winner of Round Four is the champion of the tournament. In the case of multiple fields of 16, Round Four winners meet in a Final Round. This Final Round ranges from a 2-player (the winners of two fields of battle) to a 4-player (the winners of four fields of battle) winner-take-all game. In the case of large conventions with more than four fields of battle, multiple champions will be declared after each Final Round. (For example, in a tournament consisting of five fields of battle, five champions of equal status will be declared after the Final Rounds are played.)



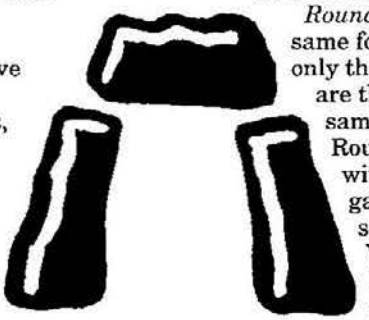
Boxes are resealed with a colored tape at the end of each round by the Judge or one of his Assistants. The tape color sequence is randomized at each tournament to inhibit cheating.

Dragon Dice BYO (Build Your Own) Tournament Rules

The tournament consists of one or more fields of battle. Each field of battle consists of 16 players. The 16 players meet in 4-player or 2-player contests as defined below and demonstrated on the BYO Tournament Sheets.

Building an Army

Each contestant brings a 24-point army to the tournament. Only half of those points can be spent on magic users. (Special: Each dragonlord and dragonmaster counts as two points of magic user and two points other, so an army composed entirely of one or both meets the requirement.) At the start of the tournament, each contestant is required to complete an Army Form. This form lists all the dice in that contestant's army. It is checked and signed by a Judge or Assistant, then signed by the contestant. At the start of each stage, a contestant' army may be checked against his Army Form. If dice have been exchanged or some other discrepancy appears, the contestant will be disqualified from the tournament.



Round One consists of four stages — a 4-player game, followed by three 2-player games among the same four opponents. Each field of battle uses one Round One tournament sheet. The 16 players are each assigned a designation (A through P) and divided into 4-player blocks.

Stage 1: Each 4-player block competes in a 4-player contest. The winner of each Stage 1 contest gains 3 Victory Points (VP).

Stage 2: 2-player contests between paired members of each block, as shown on the tournament sheet. The winner of each Stage 2 contest gains 2 VP.

Stage 3: 2-player contests between paired members of each block, as shown on the tournament sheet. The winner of each Stage 3 contest gains 2 VP.

Stage 4: 2-player contests between paired members of each block, as shown on the tournament sheet. The winner of each Stage 4 contest gains 2 VP.

Round One Winners: One winner is declared for each block of players. The player with the most total VP in a specific block wins the round. Ties within a block are handled in the following manner: two-way ties are broken in favor of the contestant who won the 2-player match versus the contestant who tied him; three-way ties (very rare) are broken by having all four contestants play another 4-player game for an additional 3 VP.

All Round One winners advance to Round Two.

Victory points accrue only from stage to stage within a round, never from one round to the next.

If the number of initial contestants is not divisible by 4, some blocks may be run in 3s, with a "ghost player" filling the D slot. The other players each receive a bye when matched against this "ghost" in Stages 2 to 4 of Round One. Byes only occur in Round One of the tournament (though they may also occur in some instances in Round Three).

Round Two consists of the same four stages as Round One, only this time the contestants are the four winners from the same field of battle. All Round Two contestants start with zero VP. Contestants gain VP for winning each stage—3 VP for Stage 1, 2 VP for Stages 2 to 4. In a tournament that consists of a single field of battle, the champion of the tournament is the contestant with the most VP at the end of Round Two.

Round Three. In a tournament that consists of two to four fields of battle, Round Three must be played to declare a tournament champion. All Round Two winners advance to Round Three. The winner of Round Three is the tournament champion.

In a tournament with two fields of battle, the two contestants play a best of three series to decide the tournament champion.

In a tournament with three fields of battle, Round Three consists of four stages, as defined above, with a "ghost" player filling the D slot. The other players each receive a bye when matched against this "ghost" in Stages 2 to 4 of Round Three.

In a tournament with four fields of battle, Round Three is played just like Round Two.

In a tournament with more than four fields of battle, multiple champions will be declared. ❑

Network FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions about the tournament program

General Topics

Proof of Membership

Why does the Network ask players to show proof of membership?
We are asking members to show valid proof of membership at members-only events because of a desire to guarantee bonafide members the benefits of membership, while excluding those who would demand those benefits without demonstrating a similar commitment.

What constitutes proof of membership?
A Network member receives a new membership card when joining the Network and should receive an updated card after renewing each year. If members wish to get an updated card before the renewal date, they can send $2.00 with their request to HQ.

Another simple way of showing membership and level of achievement is to show the mailer cover from your latest POLYHEDRON® Newszine. The label on the mailer shows name, address, membership number, expiration date, and player and judge level.

Who decides what events are members-only?
Convention tournament coordinators have, and will continue to have, the ability to regulate those events that are open to all participants. The exceptions to this include the LIVING JUNGLE™ and LIVING DEATH™ tournaments, which are always closed to non-members, LIVING CITY™ tournaments, which are open to non-members on a one-time basis only, and of course tournaments which allow admission by player rank (masters, grandmasters, paragon). Benefits may be closed at the discretion of the tournament coordinator, but we encourage these events to be open to all. *Virtual Seattle* and *Threads of Legend* events are always open to non-members.

We encourage tournament coordinators to provide both open and members-only events at each convention, allowing non-members to get a taste of the excitement of playing in Network tournaments.

If a membership expires, will points still be entered? For how long? Does a members inactivity risk the loss of points?
Points will continue to be entered into an inactive members account for at least two months after expiration. We are aware that it is sometimes difficult to keep track of member status, especially if the member has recently moved. We are considering, however, whether we want to provide some negative incentive against utilizing an expired membership unfairly. By requiring a proof of valid membership, we hope that members will continue to renew in order to continue to receive benefits, such as the ability to play in members-only events.

Disqualification

What might cause a player or judge to be disqualified in tournament play?
Network HQ dislikes disqualifying a player or judge from receiving points for any reason, and never does so lightly.

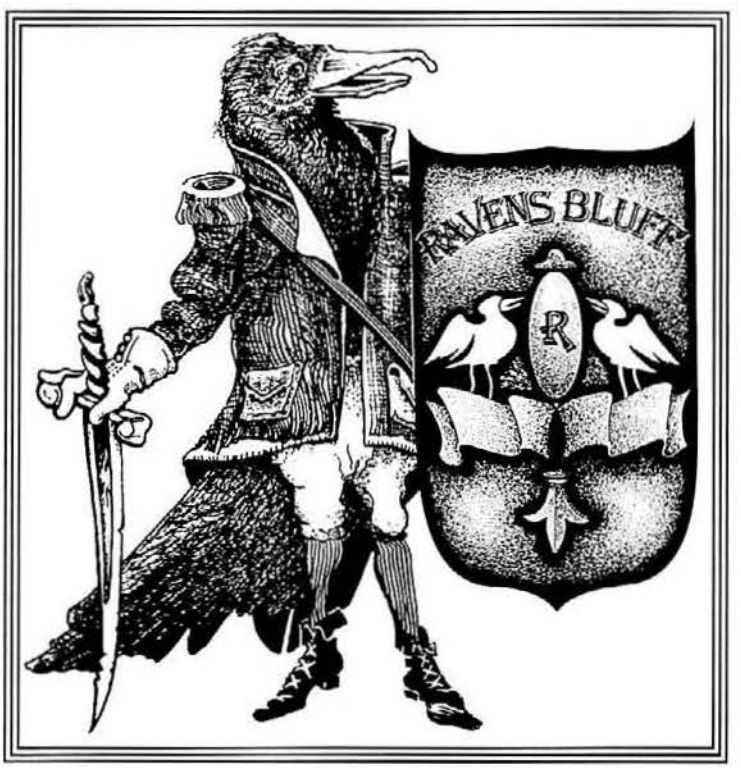
There are two primary reasons why players may disqualify themselves. The first is a willful disregard of stated rules: voting for themselves, or voting for a character instead of a player. The second is a failure to fully and legibly complete the player's summary: full name (not a nickname), membership number, address, phone number, judge ranking, and player ranking.

Network judges may disqualify themselves by failure to check the completeness of player's summaries returned them, failure to complete the judge's summary, and at the tournament coordinator's discretion, for not completing the scoring grid before returning the packet to the tournament coordinator. Tournament coordinators and their staffs are encouraged to assist their judges in completing the scoring grid, and are expected to double check the scoring of each table before announcing results, awarding prizes, and returning the completed packet to HQ.

A Network judge may be disqualified if it is found that the judge has generated new, different, or additional player characters than those pregenerated PCs found in the sanctioned Network tournament provided; the judge may be likewise disqualified if it is found that the scenario provided has been substantially altered or modified by that judge without Network HQ approval.

In addition, both judges and players may not be qualified to receive points in a sanctioned tournament if the minimum number of players is not met, or the maximum exceeded. The minimum number of players for Network events is four; the maximum in most cases is six.

Why should players and judges be dis-



qualified when a marshal places more than the maximum at their table? Why do we have maximums?
As the organizers of a basketball or softball tournament must place non-negotiable limits on the number of players that may participate in a game, so must the Network limit the number of players that may participate in Network events. These limits are intended to provide a degree of fairness and an equal ability for each player to enjoy fully the tournament which they have chosen to play.

Just as the coach and players of a team know how many players are allowed on the field, so must tournament coordinators, judges, and players learn what is acceptable within the rules, and abide by them.

Living City Topics

How do you know whether a non-member has previously played in an LC event? How can a Network judge enforce such a rule?
If a non-member's LC character has any experience points, or magic items above that allowed beginning characters, it is disallowed from play until that person joins the Network. If a pending member's LC, LJ, or LD character has a level exceeding third, it is disallowed from play until that member can show proof of membership.

Magic item certificates
Does a trading form count as a certificate?
No, a magic item trading form does not count as an item certificate, but if the traded for item does not have a certificate, it will require one.

Do old certificates without the raven symbol count (note that last year's interactive at the GEN CON® Game Fair gave out certificates without the raven on them)?
No, all items without the Raven logo will be invalid by the 1996 Game Fair. They will have to be replaced. The cost is still 50c each, but these items do not count against the limit of 20 items.

We will issue replacement or new certificates for all magical items except potions and scrolls, which you should use up before the next Game Fair.

Can you split up when you send to HQ for certificates in case you make trades for items that do not have certificates later in the year?
You may send in item certificate requests on more than one occasion. We are keeping a file of all magic item transactions in order to verify the twenty-certificate maximum.

Has HQ stopped sending out tournaments that don't have certificates? Over half of the tournaments I seen in the year didn't have them.
All tournaments sent out from August 1995 have included certificates. Network HQ recommends that judges make sure that certificates are included in the tournaments they are provided by convention tournament coordinators. We have removed a large number of the offending tournaments from the availability list, and Robert has added certificates to the tournaments left without them.

What items will be available at the Magic Trading shop this year, and what are the groundrules? Can I combine certificate-less items with additional items for which I do have certificates in order to obtain a better item? My wish list includes more powerful protection devices, boots of speed, and even a libram of silver magic. Will anything of this caliber be available?
Each shop location will have a list of all items available at the location. Some (a few) items will be quite good. Each shop's list will be unique. An interested trader will consult the list, and make Navarre an offer.

Yes, you can combine items with and without certificates to trade up for better items; sometimes, you may be required to.

Specialty Priest Abilities
Does TSR ever plan to reprint the FORGOTTEN REALMS® Adventures book, or should we just plan on photocopying the needed information out of the few existing copies?
There's a new product that will be out in March, *Faiths and Avatars* which should absolutely thrill anyone who wants information on Realms deities and specialty abilities. Those folks who wish to use the out of print FRA will be allowed to do so. Those who choose to use the new material will be likewise satisfied (we hope).

Proposed Changes

Why would HQ decide to limit LC tables to a maximum of six players?
Our decision to limit LC tables to six players is intended to optimize the experience of those that choose to play at those tables. The Network originally allowed up to eight players per table to facilitate LC coordination, but we are now finding that what we've reduced the incentive to judge LC events. We're finding that most players would prefer six per table, and that most judges agree.

I don't particularly care for the proposed restriction on the number of "Living" events a convention can request. Don't you think that this may reduce attendance at some conventions? Also, the description in the Newszine is unclear—for example, is a four-day convention restricted to 8 total "Living events"?
The total number of "Living" campaign events allowed is two per day per campaign setting. One of the two events (per campaign setting) can be first-run. This means that a four-day convention can request eight LC events (four of them new) plus eight LJ events (again, four new), for a total of 16 (the maximum). This is a lot of events. For the record, only a few very large conventions exceeded this limitation in 1995.

Member Paul Pederson writes:
One comment on the updated "Character Generation" guidelines: I've come across a few novice players who have read into them that demi-humans can adjust their attribute scores beyond 18. The sentence which causes this problem is the one beginning with "Gnomes with 19 Intelligence scores...". This entire section could easily be clarified by noting that:

"Regardless of race, initial ability scores cannot be lower than 6 or higher than 18. In addition, they cannot be raised above 18 through level advancement. This limit can exceeded only through the use of powerful magic. Characters who somehow achieve 19 intelligence do not gain immunity to first level illusion spells."

I think this captures the intent of the rule better. Also, in this way, the 9-time redundant sentence "No attribute can exceed 18." can be removed from the level advancement text. Let me know if you like this idea...

We do indeed. Revised character generation guidelines will likely see publication in May, with a phase-in period extending to October 15. Paul can expect to see his paragraph as part of those guidelines.

A Knack for Adventure

Strange new proficiencies for LIVING DEATH™ heroes

by Dave Gross

knack *n.* 1. A clever, expedient, and specific way of doing something. 2. A specific talent for doing something.
The American Heritage Dictionary

Heroes in the LIVING DEATH setting are already much more skilled than ordinary people. But since these characters, as the elite forces of good who oppose the Red Death, often brush up against the peculiar and supernatural, they often acquire unusual and even strange talents than are typical of *Masque of the Red Death* player characters. Here are some special proficiencies—some more like special powers—which heroes in the LIVING DEATH campaign may use. Since they are not strictly skills but more like weird talents, they are called knacks.

Despite the name, these knacks operate exactly as proficiencies. Heroes may acquire them just as they do ordinary proficiencies. Success or failure of a knack is based on a proficiency check. Note that a natural roll of 20 always causes a knack to fail, sometimes with undesirable results. In many cases, the knack descriptions appear in general terms (i.e., a hero with keen sense—hearing has the best possible human hearing). The exact limits of these knack will appear in the appropriate individual encounters of LIVING DEATH tournaments. For example, in one encounter an author may write for the DM, "Heroes with keen sense–hearing may detect the sound of breathing from the closed wardrobe."

Those playing *Masque of the Red Death* at home may be interested in the article "Psychic Proficiencies" by William W. Connors (DRAGON® Magazine #212). Those powerful psychic powers are not available to heros in the LIVING DEATH setting...yet.

Acquiring a Knack

Since they are unusual and often powerful, knacks cost more slots than most other proficiencies. Furthermore, a LIVING DEATH hero may begin the game with only one knack. The hero may gain additional knacks only when he acquires a new nonweapon proficiency slot by advancing in level. For example, a soldier (warrior) character may begin at first level with one knack. Thereafter, he may not gain another knack until reaching third level; even then, he must have saved one proficiency slot in order to gain a knack that costs two slots, or have saved two to gain one that costs three. A player may "reserve" as many proficiency slots as desired but may assign proficiencies and knacks to his hero only between tournament sessions, not during an adventure.

Knack Descriptions

Ambidexterity: This knack does not allow a hero to fight with a weapon in each hand without penalty (though it does reduce the penalty by 2, for a-0 /-2 penalty). Rather, it allows a hero to use either hand as his "lead" hand. For instance, an ambidextrous character with only one hand free could use it at no penalty to throw a coat button though his the bars of his prison cell. Likewise, a warrior fencing left-handed could change hands without penalty; but should he choose to fight with a weapon in each hand, he must still designate one as the "lead" hand.

Animal Affinity: Similar to the ranger's ability to modify the reaction of animals, this knack allows the hero to modify the reaction of a particular category of animal (dogs, wolves, domestic cats, great cats, horses, birds, etc.). A successful proficiency check requires the animal to make a saving throw vs. rods. Failure of the saving throw means that the hero can move the animal's reaction up to two categories (from hostile to cautious, or from cautious to friendly). Even if the saving throw fails, as long as the hero's roll for animal affinity was successful, the animal in question will prefer to attack others before the hero.

Failure of the proficiency check means that the animal's reaction simply does not change, though a natural roll of 20 actually worsens the animal's reaction to the hero by two categories.

Calculator: Heroes with this knack are able to calculate arithmetic values with lightning speed. Those with this talent can balance long tables of calculations in their heads in one-tenth the time it would take an ordinary person. Failure of the proficiency check indicates that the calculation is dramatically incorrect, but the hero realizes he has become muddled. If the check fails on a natural 20, the hero is quite certain that he is correct, even though he is absolutely wrong.

Connoisseur: Heroes with this knack are excellent judges of painting, cuisine, winemaking, or brewing. Note that this is not simply a special interests proficiency; rather than simply conveying knowledge of the subject, this knack gives the hero an exquisite appreciation for the art of his field. If the hero has both a special interest in a field and is also a connoisseur of it, then either proficiency check is made at a +2 bonus.

On a successful proficiency check, the hero may not only identify the peculiar qualities of the work (i.e., naming the vineyard and year of a wine), but may also make fine value judgments and commentary about the work. This knack is especially useful in determining the difference between an original or authentic work and an imitation.

When first taken, this knack must be limited to a particular category: cuisine of a nation, wine, beer, liquors, painting, sculpture, music, and so forth. Furthermore, the hero may specialize in a particular subcategory of the chosen category, be it Tuscan cuisine (rather than just Italian), Belgian brewing, 16th Century sculpture, etc. In his specialized category, the hero gains a +2 bonus to the proficiency check. Failure of a connoisseur proficiency check means that the hero has failed to grasp some important qualities of the work; failure on a natural roll of 20 means that the hero makes a blindingly bad judgment—potentially embarrassing if other connoisseurs of the same field are present.

Estimator: Those with this knack can make quick and accurate guesses about a chosen value. When a hero first chooses this talent, it must be for only one of those three values: numbers, weights, or distances. It is possible for a hero to take this knack a second time in a different value.

Numbers estimators may guess the number of books on a shelf or the number of pedestrians on a busy street. Weight estimators often work at sideshows but can also guess the weights of much larger objects than human beings. Distance estimators are valued as scouts in the military.

On a successful proficiency check, estimators can guess values within 10% (roll 1d10) of the actual value after 1–4 rounds of observation. Failure means that the estimator is uncertain and realizes it; failure on a natural roll of 20 means that the hero is 20–80% inaccurate but is sure that he is correct.

Feign Death: A successful use of this knack places the hero in the same cataleptic state created by the third-level wizard spell of the same name. The hero can maintain the feign death condition for up to one hour plus one turn per point under his knack score he rolled on the check. For example, a character with a Constitution of 13 (and thus a knack score of 12) rolls a 9 on his check. He may feign death for one hour and three (12_9=3) turns.

Failure of the proficiency check indicates that the hero cannot achieve the cataleptic state and is merely "playing dead." A successful Charisma check allows the ruse to convince a casual viewer, but failure means that the hero inadvertently gives away some tell-tale sign of life (breathing, movement of the eyelids, etc.). On a natural roll of 20, the hero not only fails to feign death but also makes some clear sign that he lives (a sneeze, for instance).

Keen Sense: Heroes with this knack must choose one of the five basic senses to enhance: sight, hearing, smell, taste, or touch. This knack gives the hero the highest possible human perception with the chosen sense. A hero with keen sense—sight can see as far and as clearly as the best sharpshooter; one with keen sense—taste can detect the most subtle trace of poison in his dinner, as long as a human could do so.

Failure of this knack indicates that the hero's senses operate no better than human average, not that the hero becomes desensitized or gains false information. Heroes who begin the game with this knack may later upgrade it to uncanny sense by assigning an additional proficiency slot to it.

Light Sleeper: Heroes with this knack are wakened by the slightest disturbance nearby. Whenever an assailant sneaks up upon a light sleeper, the sleeper may make a knack check. Success indicates that the hero wakes instantly and is completely aware of his surroundings without the usual grogginess and disorientation. Failure simply means that the hero has normal chances to wake (if any are given in the scenario); failure on a natural 20 means that the hero can be awakened only by loud sounds or shaking.

Mimicry, Sounds: This knack lets the hero imitate non-articulated sounds such as the call of a bird, the click of a pistol cocking, or the sound of tearing paper. In the case of known animals or sounds the hero has heard before, a successful proficiency check indicates that the sound is indistinguishable from the original. If the hero wishes, he can imitate the particularly annoying bark of Mrs. Whimsley's English terrier or the familiar cough of James, her butler. Failure of this check simply means that the mimicry is unconvincing.

Mimicry, Voice: Much more refined than sound mimicry, voice mimicry allows the hero to imitate exactly the voice of another person. The hero must have had the opportunity to hear the voice of the one he wishes to imitate. If the voice has been heard only once for no more than a few minutes, the proficiency check is made at a -6 penalty. If the hero has heard the voice he wishes to imitate for at least an hour, the roll is made at a -4 penalty. If the hero is at least casually acquainted with his intended subject and has heard the voice several times for hours at a time, the roll is made at only a -2 penalty. Only if the hero is very familiar with his subject (acquainted for months) does the roll suffer no penalty.

Perfect Pitch: Those with this knack can identify any single note played or sung with perfect accuracy. If the hero also has the singing proficiency, he can duplicate any particular note at will. Furthermore, if the hero makes a successful proficiency check at a -4 penalty, he can produce a note capable of shattering thin glass within a 20' range.

Perfect Memory: Heroes may gain this knack in one of two areas: auditory or visual memory. Those wishing to have both knacks must acquire them separately. A successful roll with this proficiency allows the hero to remember any key bit of information the player may have forgotten. For instance, a player whose detective hero has perfect auditory memory may ask the DM whether the voice he heard from behind a curtain seemed familiar, or whether he had heard the music playing in the hotel lobby before.

In cases in which the hero may have subconsciously observed something but the player did not specifically state so (i.e., the hero visited a house, but the player didn't specifically state he was looking at the address), the DM may allow a proficiency check at a —10 penalty.

Speed Reading: A hero with this talent can read and comprehend any language he already understands ten times as quickly as normal. A book that would normally take four hours to read would take the speed reader only 24 minutes. While the hero with this knack retains what he has read just as well as anyone who had read it at the normal rate, this talent does not convey any special understanding or retention of the material read.

Uncanny Sense: This knack is like keen sense, but a hero with uncanny sense exceeds even the highest human levels in his chosen sense. A hero with uncanny hearing has the auditory sensitivity of a dog, able to detect sounds even outside the normal human range; one with acute touch could feel and even make out the faint impressions left on a sheet of paper left under one on which a note was written. ❑

Knacks

Proficiency/ Knack	# of slots	Relevant Ability	Check modifier
Ambidexterity	2	n/a	n/a
Animal Affinity	3	Wis	-2
Calculator	2	Int	-3
Connoisseur	2	Wis	-2
Estimator	2	Wis	-3
Feign Death	3	Con	-1
Keen Sense	2	Con	-2
Light Sleeper	3	Wis	0
Mimicry, Voice	3	Wis	-2
Mimicry, Sounds	2	Wis	0
Perfect Memory, Auditory	2	Int	-1
Perfect Memory, Visual	3	Int	-2
Perfect Pitch	2	Wis	0
Speed Reading	2	Int	-1
Uncanny Sense	3	Con	-2

Notes From HQ

New product and policies

New LIVING CITY™ Product Hits the Network

The newest LIVING CITY player support product will be released at the upcoming WINTER FANTASY™ convention. The 40-page booklet, entitled *A Player's Guide to the Living City*, contains everything that any player should know about the city of Ravens Bluff. Look for a section on everyday life, an expanded section on guilds (including three new ones for player characters), some information on the Civic Religion and guidelines for new temples, and more. There is also a complete index of businesses and a selection of NPC personalities which have been published either in the Newszine or in tournaments. All of this costs you only six bucks US. That's $6. We are selling this only through preorder, so if you want one you should send us a check or money order for $6, made out to RPGA® Network, along with a letter. You can pick yours up next month at the WINTER FANTASY convention or we'll mail it right after the con.

Added Decathlon Event

We have decided to add one more Service Event to the 1996 Decathlon competition:

Best Paperwork by a Club-Sponsored Convention
Event Period: January 1 to November 30

First Place:	6 points
Second Place:	4 points
Participating:	2 points

Clubs which sponsor conventions can enter this category, which involves getting the Network scoring packs as close to perfect as possible. The convention must have a minimum of 20 scoring packs completed for events listed on a Tournament Request Form that was submitted on time and with proper payment. In addition, the packs must be received at Network HQ within six weeks of the date of the convention. Packs will be graded on neatness and accuracy. Points will be awarded based on the ratio of accurate packs to the total number of packs submitted. To enter this event, the club must submit a Decathlon Entry Form listing the convention it is sponsoring with the Tournament Request Form.

Submitting to the Network

Any manuscript submission to the Network, whether a tournament or a Newszine article, must be accompanied by a self-addressed stamped envelope. You will not get your manuscript back unless you pay the postage. We recommend that you include a letter-sized envelope with a stamp for letter replies. This will get you a faster response, and we can spend the postage money on better programs. Your help will be appreciated.

Living City News

Navarre the Magic Trader, or his assistant Zeno, will be seen at the following conventions between now and the Game Fair in August. Trading of magic items will take place at specified times during the con only.

Navarre (Robert):
WINTER FANTASY™, Feb 9-11, Milwaukee WI
Total Confusion, Feb 22-25, Marlborough MA
*Dragon*Con*, June 20-23, Atlanta GA
Dex Con, July 10-14, Somerset NJ

Zeno (Scott)
ConnCon, March 22-24, Waterbury CT
Games Caucus II, May 24-27, Oakland CA
Ben Con, May 31-June 2, Denver CO

Judges Needed

Judges are still needed for the 1996 WINTER FANTASY convention in all events. If you judge three or more slots, you get in for $15, half off the entry fee. Plus, judges get the opportunity to pre–register for two World Builder seminars, while other attendees must get their tickets onsite. So please consider judging; the members will thank you.

Proposed Policy Changes

• We propose to change the policy regarding payment for tournaments submitted to and accepted by Network HQ. We would like to pay for player characters as if they were a tournament round. So, a one round AD&D tournament with characters would get you $70, while a one round Living City tournament without characters would get you only $35. We know that none of you write tournaments for the money, but characters take at least as much time and effort as a tournament round and we feel that we can recognize that extra work.

• We would like to allow conventions to submit Tournament Request Forms after the four-month deadline that now exists. However, this disruption of our workload would have a cost. For each month that a request is late, an additional *$10* per round would be charged.

For example, if you run a convention with six tournament rounds, then you pay $60 if the paperwork comes in by the four-month deadline, $120 if it comes in by 90 days before your con, $180 if it comes in before 60 days before your con, and $240 if it arrives earlier than 30 days before your convention. We would not accept requests later than 30 days before the con, and this policy would not apply to submitted events. This means that if you run all events from the archives, you can send the request in late and pay the extra fees, but if you are running even one submitted event then your request must arrive at HQ six months before your convention.

Tell us what you think of these proposals. We will consider feedback we receive in writing by February 15, 1996.

Classifieds

ENGLAND: Hi! I'm a Canadian who has just moved to England and I am looking for players in Berkshire County near Bracknell and South Ascot. I play the FORGOTTEN REALMS® AD&D® setting, *Rolemaster* (I refuse to GM it though), and any other role-playing game that is out there. I would be willing to join an existing group, or form a new group with me as a GM. If you are interested you can contact me at 43 Carroll Crescent, South Ascot, Berks SL5 NEJ, Tel 0344-25176, or at the following e-mail address: Jules@shae.demon.co.uk.

NORTH CAROLINA—Looking for DMs and players to travel through the FORGOTTEN REALMS setting. If you are interested, please write Kelly Beheler at 1277 Garrison Lane, Apt 14A, Lincolnton NC 28092 or call (704) 736 1715.

PENNSYLVANIA: Hail fellow gamers! My name is David Tatasciore, 13 years old, and looking to start or join a gaming club in the Delaware Valley area. I'm familiar with the MYSTARA®, FORGOTTEN REALMS, DRAGONLANCE®, SPELLJAMMER®, RAVENLOFT® and *Star Wars* settings. If interested, contact me at: 18 Wyncroft Drive, Media, PA 19063. Or call 610-565-3023.

UTAH: Attention! All role players in the Layton area. I'm looking for new souls for my group D&D®, AD&D, RAVENLOFT. DM also needed. If interested contact, Dave Stock 825-7271 or 1190 W 1700 S Syracuse, UT 84075.

WEST VIRGINIA: Looking for experienced players and DMs for the AD&D game. I really like to play in the FORGOTTEN REALMS but any setting will do. Please write me at 1017 WV Ave., Parkersburg, WV 26104 or call at 304-422-9841 ask for David. Any ages will do.

CALLING ALL GAMEMASTERS! Andon Unlimited is always looking for qualified Gamemasters to run RPGA® Network events at their conventions. Systems used include AD&D (including RAVENLOFT, BIRTHRIGHT™, etc.), *Paranoia*, *Call of Cthulhu*, *Shadowrun*, *Species*, *Chill*, and others. Gamemasters receive full or partial refunds, depending on the number of events they run. 1996 conventions are Seattle Game Fest (Seattle, WA, Feb 29-Mar 3), 3-Rivers Game Fest (Pittsburgh, PA, May 24-27), Origins (Columbus, OH July 4-7), AndCon (Toledo, OH, Sept 12-15), 3-Rivers Fall Fest (Pittsburgh, PA, November). If you are interested in helping, please write, call, or email: Andon Unlimited. P O Box 1740, Renton, WA 98057. 206-204-5815. Andon@aol.com.

FOR SALE: Huge 14 page list of out of print games, modules, magazines and rule books for TSR and other major companies. Every item strictly graded and fairly priced. To receive a copy of the list, send a large SASE (with 55¢ postage) to: Michael Cox, P O Box 5203, Kendall Park, NJ 08824-5203. Email StackMC@aol.com

FOR SALE: Numerous SPELLFIRE® and BLOOD WARS™ cards for sale. Complete set of all SPELLFIRE with all promo cards and complete set of BLOOD WARS cards with promo card. Also interested in trading cards. Please send your offer to Dan Watters, P.O. Box 447, Sussex, NB, E0E 1P0, Canada. Or call and leave message at 506-432-6032. Over 10,000 individual cards for sale by request.

FOR SALE OR TRADE: SPELLFIRE cards: 1-400; 1-25 specials; 1,2 promo. Will sell or trade for AD&D stuff. All cards are first edition, never been used, all in plastic sheets. Contact Timothy Smith, P.O. Box 694, Sussex, NB, E0E 1P0, Canada.

FOR SALE OR TRADE: SPELLFIRE, BLOOD WARS and others. SPELLFIRE chase cards wanted; *Powers* chase 1, 8, 11, 13, 16, 17; *Artifacts* chase 2, 4, 6, 7, 16, 19; FORGOTTEN REALMS chase 11, 12; DRAGONLANCE chase 4(2). Also wanted *Powers* #45 and SPELLFIRE #422(3), 424(2), 425(3), 437(2). BLOOD WARS wanted: *Rebels and Reinforcements*: The Converted and Lady of Pain; *Factions and Factols*: Diplomatic Treachery, Manes, Rest & Relaxation, Signer Mark. Many cards for trade. Howard Dawson, 25212 Harper Ave., St. Clair Shores MI 48081. (810) 772-2020 (days) (313) 885-0705 (nights).

PEN PAL: I'm into the AD&D game. Will answer any and all letters regardless of age, race, or sex. Write: Larry L McCrary, 23 North Hospital Drive, Orofino, ID 83544.

PEN PAL: 21 year old player/master searching for penpals (male or females) any age interested in exchanging ideas and information on AD&D games. Also searching for information on Tiamat and Bahamut the unique dragons. I am willing to buy any information if it is the original book or photo copy it doesn't matter. Anyone interested can write to: Donald Keil, Old Route 22 Drawer A, Cresson, PA 16630-0001.

PEN PAL: Hello, my name is Corey LeMoine and I am 15 years old. I am interested in a pen pal. Anyone interested in fantasy please contact me at P O Box 196, Montgomery, LA 71454.

PBM: Dragonslayers Unlimited is inviting all gamers around the country and around the world, to join our unique gaming club. What makes our club unique from any other gaming club is that we are a play by mail gaming club. Our members offer a wide variety and are always looking for new and interesting games to play. For more information contact: Dragonslayers Unlimited, c/o Bill Brierton, 12420 Old Colony Drive, Upper Marlboro, MD 20772-5000.

TRAVELLER: Attention *Traveller* fans! Is there interest in fanzine devoted to rejuvenating original *Traveller*? Four issues for $10 a year would be packed with adventures, new races, skills, careers, planets, starships, weapons and equipment. Send SASE with comments and questions to: Jumpspace, 4900 Overland #237, Culver City, CA 90230.

WANTED: GREYHAWK® modules numbers A1, A4, C1, C2, GDQ1-7, I1, L1, N1, S1, S2, S3, WG4, WG5, WG7, WG8, WG10, WG12, WGA1, WGA4. Send reply to: Richard L. Hall, 13698 Walnut St., Southgate, MI 48195-1813. Will only pay fair prices. Also Dragons #37 or before.

Conventions

Wright State Game Faire, January 13, Dayton OH—Convention will be held at WSU Student Union. Events: LIVING CITY, LIVING JUNGLE™, AD&D® game, *Star Wars*, *Call of Cthulhu*, boardgames, and miniatures gaming. Other activities include card games and tournaments. Miniatures painting contest. Dealers, artists and movies as well as a charity auction and door prizes on site registration $20. Pre-register for $15. Contact Allen Gifford, 8844 Flick Road, Tipp City OH 45371.

AEtherCon, Jan 14, Milwaukee WI—Milwaukee School of Engineering will host this con which will feature a LIVING CITY and a LIVING JUNGLE event as well as a *Magic: the Gathering* tournament. Located at the Todd Wehr Conference Center at 1047 N. Broadway. Doors open at 10 am; free parking available across the street. For more info, contact: AEtherCon, MLH 1102, PO Box 353, Milwauke WI 53201–0353 or email terrillt@obrien.msoe.edu.

Constitution IV, January 19-21, Laurel MD—The Best Western-Maryland Inn is the site for three fun-filled days of gaming including LIVING CITY events, sanctioned *Magic: the Gathering* tournaments and a variety of other role-playing, card, and board games, as well as a dealers room and other attractions. For more information, write to P.O. Box 13607, Silver Spring MD, 20911-3607 or call 301-946-7147.

ATCON, Jan 26–28, Austin TX—A fantastic mix of role–playing, card games, and strategic games, held at the Ramada Inn on Ben White in Austin. There will be RPGA Network events, and our special guests will be Jean and Bruce Rabe. We will also have a benefit auction for the Faith home. The cost for preregistration is $15, or $12 for GOAT or Network members. For more information, contact Gamers of Austin Texas (GOAT), 3816 South Lamar #2019, Austin TX 78704, or call (512) 867 3821.

Conline XX, January 27-28, TSR Online RoundTable, GEnie — Who said that you had to leave home to go to a convention? Four RPGA Network sanctioned tournaments are brought to the TSR Online RoundTable four times a year. Have you been looking for a way to increase your Network ranking, but have no available way to get to a convention? Conline is one possibility. As in the past, Conline XX will feature both LIVING CITY and LIVING JUNGLE tournaments as well as a feature tournament set in one of the AD&D campaign settings. There will be guest speakers online to take in questions or queries about new products. Both LAMP and UCC Network clubs run activities to promote the Conline events. Come online and join us to celebrate the 20th anniversary of Conlines on GEnie. For more information on Conline or any of its activities, please send email to: KNIGHT$@genie.geis.com.

ClubCon V Feb. 3-4, Richfield OH—This con will be held at the richfield Holiday Inn-Holidome. Events will include LIVING CITY and LIVING JUNGLE, *Magic: the Gathering* tournaments, Games Workshop sponsored miniature events, LARP *Vampire*, computer gaming and a 24 hour movie room. Pre-registration cost for a weekend badge will be $10.95 until January, 1 and $14.95 after that. For more information write to "The Club", P.O. Box 3575, Kent OH 44240, or email Warhawk@aol.com.

Realmcon '96, Feb. 10–11, Miami FL—at the Miami Airport Holiday Inn, on Blue Lagoon Drive. RPGA events, LIVING CITY, RAVENLOFT® setting, *Call of Cthulhu*, *Magic: the Gathering* tournament, open gaming, and dealers. Pre-Reg $25, $15 per day at door, special room rates available. For furthr info, call (305) 226-4267, fax (305) 383-3668, or e-mail Aramen@bridge.net or Milanir@aol.com

Orccon 19, February 16-19, Los Angeles CA — LAX Wyndham, 6226 W Century Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90045. Contact Jeff Albanese, Strategoicon, 333 N San Fernando Blvd., Burbank CA 91502. 808-848-1748.

Total Confusion X '96, Feb 22–25, Marlboro MA—We have expanded our timetable and events! Events will include: the AD&D game *Assault, Axis & Allies, Battletech, Call of Cthulhu, Car Wars, Champions, DC Heroes, Diplomacy GURPS, Jyhad, Magic: the Gathering, Paranoia, Railroad, Risk, Shadowrun, Space Hulk, Star Fleet Battles, Vampire,* and *Werewolf.* There will be over 200 scheduled games, a miniatures painting contest, and a dinner theater production. Preregistration costs $10 per day or $30 for all four days; registration at the door costs $12 per day. For more information, contact Total Confusion, PO Box 604, North Oxford MA 01537 or call (508) 987–5244.

Concentric, Mar 7–10, Park Ridge IL— Come to the Center of the Universe! Concentric brings the best in gaming to the Chicago area. Network events include two first run LIVING CITY events, a first run *Virtual Seattle*, plus Feature, Masters, LIVING JUNGLE, *Star Wars*, and *Champions*. The LIVING CITY interactive and the convention–long *Vampire* interactive, great miniatures events, card game tournaments, and more make this the convention that you cannot afford to miss. Special guests include Tom Wham and Susan Van Camp. Write to Concentric, 114 Euclid, Box 287, Park Ridge IL, 60068. Network judges email silverwyrm@aol.com to volunteer.

The Gamer's Con III, March 15-17, Cherry Hill NJ — Returning to the Philadelphis area, sponsored by the Gamer's Realms and Multigenre, Inc., this convention will be held at the Sheraton Cherry Hill on Rt. 70 in Cherry Hill NJ. Events include board, card, miniatures, Live-Action and role-playing games. A full track of RPGA Network and LIVING CITY events will be presented. Other activities include *Magic: the Gathering* tournaments, dealer's room, game auction, seminars, signings, anime, and demonstrations/ presentations by gaming companies from across the country. Registration: $20 preregistered, $25 at the door. Single day rates vary. Write to: Multigenre, Inc., 266 Spruce Drive, Brick NJ 08723; or email: acd@hotld.att.com or Multigenre@aol.com.

Join over 3500 players in the largest continuing AD&D adventure in the FORGOTTEN REALMS, The LIVING CITY™

A Weekend in RAVENS BLUFF 2

Five Rounds of First-Run LIVING CITY Events coming to you in 1996 at the following conventions & locations:

April 13-14:

A Weekend in Ravens Bluff 2
Griffith, IN
Randall Lemon
P.O. Box 9332
Highland, IN 46322

A Weekend in Ravens Bluff 2
San Francisco, CA
Chris McGuigan
2010 Hillside Dr
Burlingame, CA 94010

CapCon
Columbus, OH
Patrick Connolly
2509 Deming Ave
Columbus, OH 43202

April 20-21:

Ville-Con
Maryville, MO
Sam Frazier II
611 North Buchanan # A
Maryville, MO 64468

Con-Troll
Houston, TX
Terry Hawkins
4734 Warm Springs
Houston, TX 77035

A Weekend in Ravens Bluff
Denver, CO
Ken Ritchart
1024 Sagebrush Way
Louisville, CO 80027

April 27-28:

A Weekend in Ravens Bluff 2
Columbia, SC
Neal Wilhite
7645 Garners Fair Rd #1009-F
Columbia, SC 29209

A Weekend in Ravens Bluff
Norman, OK
Craig Petillo
1544 NW 46ith St
Oklahoma, OK 73118

A Weekend in Ravens Bluff 2
St. Catherines, Ont
Gregg Peevers
222 The Esplanade #431
Toronto, Ontario M5A 4M8

A Weekend in Ravens Bluff 2
Honolulu, HI
Eric Kline
P.O. Box 90182
Honolulu, HI 96835

A Weekend in Ravens Bluff 2
Orlando, FL
Bob Farnsworth
419 Elkwood Ct
Orlando, FL 32825

A Weekend in Ravens Bluff 2
Fort Dix, NJ
Don Weatherbee
86A Dafrack Drive
Lake Hiawatha, NJ 07034

Spring Revel '96 and Little Wars '96, March 21-24, Rosemont IL — Join us once again at the Ramada Hotel O'Hare as we combine forces with the Little Wars 1996 Historical Con. We feature several Network events, AD&D, LIVING CITY, LIVING JUNGLE, LIVING DEATH™ and more. This year we also feature the Cardgame arena for all those great collectible card games. History comes to life at our other convention, with over four days of over 100 miniature games. Pre-reg $12/weekend, $7/day before February 15. Admission at the door is $10/day, $15/weekend. An extra $3 gets you into both conventions. $2 event fees. Judges receive $3 discount per event judged (we need judges) with four or more slots giving you free registration. For more information send SASE to Spring Revel, Box 27, Theresa WI 53091. Attn: Keith Polster.

Coscon 96, March 22-24, 1996, Butler, PA—The Circle of Swords Gaming Guild is sponsoring a gaming convention that will be held at the Days Inn Conference Center. Scheduled events will include RPGA Network tournaments including LIVING CITY and benefit tournaments, collectible card game events, board games, historical and fantasy miniature events, free form role-playing events, and other role-playing events. We will also have a dealers area, auction, new game demonstrations, and other special events and guests. Registration is $15 until March 10 and $20 thereafter and at the door. For details, send a SASE to: Circle of Swords, P.O. Box 2126, Butler PA 16003.

Neovention XV, March 22-24, Akron OH — Gardner Student Center, The University of Akron, Akron OH 44325. Rates $6 daily, $15 all weekend. RPGA events. Contact Brian N Podlogar, University Gaming Society, Gardner Student Center #6, The University of Akron, Akron OH 04325. (216-972-7345).

Egyptian Campaign, Mar 29–31, Carbondale IL—The SIUC Strategic Games Society is hosting Egyptian Campaign 1996 in the ballrooms of Southern Illinois University's Student Center in Carbondale IL. Doors open at noon on Friday and 8:00 am on Saturday and Sunday. There will be the AD&D game, an RPGA Network tournament, *Vampire, Shadowrun, Battletech, Warhammer 40K, Warhammer Fantasy Battle,* and a *Magic: the Gathering* tournament, as well as many other board, miniatures, and role–playing events. There will also be an auction, a miniatures painting contest, and special guests. The cost is $10 for preregistration or $12 at the door. For more info and a preregistration packet, send a SASE to: Egyptian Campaign '96, The Strategic Games Society, Office of Student Development, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale IL, 62901–4495, or call Joel Nadler at (618) 529 4630. You can also email us at ecgamcon96@aol.com.

NoahCon, April 27-28, Avon Lake OH — Aqua-Marine Resort, Miller Road, Avon Lake OH 44012. Contact Eric Vaessen, Matrix Games and Diversions, 5384 East Lake Rd, Sheffield Lake OH 44054. 216-949-5787.

DemiCon VII, May 3–5 1996, Des Moines IA—ACI is back for its fourth year at DemiCon with even more games and prizes and a healthy dose of science fiction frenzies. In addition to 24 hour gaming (the AD&D game, Magic: the Gathering, Killer, Australian Rails, Dragon Supreme, and many RPGA Network events), there will be costume contests, filking, writers workshops, miniature painting, and a 24 hour con suite. At DemiCon, you run your game by your schedule, not ours. For more information, contact ACI at 1304 Boyd St, Des Moines IA 50316–1452 or call (515) 266 2358.

Mage Con North 2, May 3-5, Sioux Falls, SD — A complete gaming convention featuring all types and genres of games. Tournaments, advanced and beginner events. Events will include: *Magic: the Gathering*, *Warhammer Fantasy Battle*, *Diplomacy*, *Pendragon*, and live-action rpg. Also, costume, art, and painting contests; dealers area; and special guest Margaret Weis. For more information write: Mage Con North, P O Box 84828, Sioux Falls, SD 57118-4828, call 605-334-2855, or email MAGECon@aol.com.

At-Last!-a-Con, May 4–5, Ferguson MO—Events: RPGA Network events, LIVING CITY scenarios, *Magic: the Gathering*, Battletech, Star Fleet, and more. Located at the Knights of Columbus Hall, 119 S. Florissant, Ferguson MO. Pre–registration costs $6 for two days. For more info, contact SAGA, PO Box 297, St Ann MO 63074.

The Ravens Bluff Trumpeter

Editor-in-Chief: Fred Faber
City News Editor: Clio Hesperin
Society Editor: Jacinth Moonspring

Deputy Mayor Holiday Resigns!

Howard Holiday unexpectedly resigned his post as Deputy Mayor yesterday, causing a stir at the meeting of the Council of Lords. Claiming personal reasons, Holiday said that he must leave Ravens Bluff for an extended period, and he thought it best for the city that he permanently leave his post. Lord Mayor Charles O'Kane expressed shock and regret at the move, saying "Howard has been my good friend for many years, and he has been a good friend to the city as well. It will be hard to replace him."

Howard Holiday came to Ravens Bluff almost 20 years ago, and worked his way up to the Deputy Mayor position through hard work and dedication to the city. He has ably managed his duties, and the city will feel his loss.

This morning, Lord Mayor O'Kane issued this statement. "Though Howard's loss will be hard on us, I must think of the future. I have considered well and decided to appoint Belanor as the new Deputy Mayor. Belanor has been an adventurer for several years and has experienced much in his life. I believe that he will bring a new perspective to the office. We say goodbye to Howard with our best wishes for his success and happiness."

Reactions to this announcement have been muted, except in the adventuring community. Many of the city's heroes are glad to see one of their number, instead of a politician, raised to this prestigious position.

Attention Focuses on Winter Festival

The upcoming Winter Festival has become the focus of some very important events. Chief among these are the appointment of the new Deputy Mayor, Belanor, and the announcement of the new Lord Speaker of the Advisory Council. The Lord Speaker appointment is schedule for an exclusive dinner at the end of the Festival. Another highlight will be the marriage of Lord Charles Frederick Blacktree IV, our own Field General, to Lady Katharine Marie Moorland, Lord Speaker of the Council of Lords. The wedding will take place at the Blacktree estate, with priests of Lathander Morninglord presiding. Most of the city's wealthy and important people have been invited, along with a great many adventurers.

The Festival is touted as the most lavish public fête in years. Knightly orders will hold tournaments, there will be winter sporting competitions, the land office will be open, and the temple of Tymora will have a Wheel of Fortune. Win prizes and support the city's fine orphanage. Merchants will once again be providing refreshment and the occasional contest of skill or chance. All are invited to experience the best that Ravens Bluff has to offer.

The Winter Festival will take place at the WINTER FANTASY™ convention on Sunday. Festivities begin at 8 am and continue until 1 pm. Bring a painted miniature of your character, along with your character sheet and a couple of d20, for added fun.

Sarbreenar Attacked!

City officials just received word that the mountain town of Sarbreenar, a way stop on the road to Procampur, has been almost annihilated by a large humanoid army. One witness who escaped described giants, ogres, trolls, and other monsters rampaging through the town. Nothing is known of the town's fate, but a division of troops under Field Marshal Lord Blacktree have been dispatched to provide aid.

Society News

Greetings faithful readers. Rather than waste time with the normal who's been seen with whom, I want to jump right into a matter of great importance: the possibility that one of our own Ravens Bluff socialites might be undead!

The story began two years ago when I met an older adventurer called Carmen of Aber's Way (*played by Mark Liberman of GA*). A nice older man, short, with a respectable mop of salt and pepper hair for someone his age, and he seemed to know his way around a chess board. When the House of Thud opened a year ago, Carmen became the head dealer. Other than that, he didn't warrant any interest from me.

However, my sources have recently informed me that Carmen has changed. Strange as it may seem, several people have now confirmed to me that this nice old man could possibly be, believe it or not, a vampire! I made a social call down to Crow's End, and wouldn't have believed it if I hadn't seen it. The Carmen I spoke with was not the man I knew. He now stands much taller, and not a fleck of gray can be seen atop his head. Even his skin looks tighter on his face. When I asked him his secret, he just smiled at me.

I don't know, loyal readers. Vampires as citizens? Carmen didn't even deny the rumors; rather, he seemed to relish them. I wasn't willing to stop there. I demanded answers. However, Goliath Grimstroke (*played by Bill Reyonds of GA*), a Nightwatch officer and undead hunter extraordinare, denied that Carmen possesses any supernatural powers. When asked for a quote, Grimstroke abruptly responded, "The affairs of the living are none of my concern," and stormed away to his private cemetary plot. Trust me, my friends, I will not let this one go uninvestigated!.

Column by Wayne S. Melnick. If you have any gossip worthy of print and that should be spread around, contact Wayne through Network HQ or by email at "Cateyes01@aol.com."